

The Australian

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WOMEN'S WEEKLY

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DECEMBER 30, 1953

PRICE



Camels replace reindeer at
Alice Springs, See page 2.

INSIDE:

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BY CHARLES
TERROT

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The Australian WOMEN'S WEEKLY

DECEMBER 30, 1953

Vol. 21, No. 31

ENCHANTMENT OF CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS does a peculiar thing to the adult mind.

For days beforehand a great many grown men and women apparently suffer from a severe attack of split personality.

They approach the festive season with all the outward signs of a Scrooge.

Irritation nags them night and day. They grumble about the cost of everything, the trouble of it all.

Intolerant and with tattered tempers they fight their way through the crowds in the shops and streets.

At the same time, they search with almost extravagant care for just the right present for Aunt Jane.

They recall their existence with cheerful greetings to friends far away. They plan big, happy family gatherings on the day itself.

Christmas Eve. Then the split suddenly ceases to exist.

They become, in a moment, as uncomplicated as children.

The furious pace slows down. The following morning they go to church. They sing carols with innocent joy.

They listen to the Queen's broadcast and think regretfully of the boys in Korea and the other people all over the world who won't be celebrating at home this year.

The old enchantment, with the power and sentiment of 1953 years behind it, binds them on one more Christmas Day.

Our cover:

● When Santa visits Alice Springs he goes by camel—not reindeer. The scene on the cover was recorded two miles from the township, in the colorful Macdonnell Ranges, by Miss Trish Collier, a New Zealander now living in Central Australia. Santa was on his way to Alice Springs Hospital, where a party for 800 children was held.

This week:

● On the opposite page is a short story, "The Sack For Santa," by local author Maureen Luson, of Essendon, Victoria, who has told us these facts about herself: "I am afraid The Australian Women's Weekly must take full responsibility for the emergence of this author as such! When I won your Romance Quiz in March, 1952, there was no more astonished female in the Southern Hemisphere! But it set me thinking, 'If I know so much about romance, then I can write stories.' So, in May, 1952, I began, in grim earnest, pounding the typewriter. Since then I have sold more than 40 stories to Australian papers and radio stations.

"As for the rest, I am a Jill-of-all-trades, and since schooldays have hurled myself violently and with varying success into all kinds of hobbies and jobs—teaching, typing, gardening, toy-making, cooking, acting (leading comedy light in amateurs, dumb walk-on parts in local rep.)—and I've travelled around Europe a good bit, and in India."

Next week:

● Next week our free novel is "Murder of the Well Beloved," a sophisticated thriller by Australian author Margot Neville. The story is set in Sydney and concerns the fortunes of pretty Jo Somers, who was the unluckiest girl in the world to be involved in the violent situation that exploded around her. And so was Bob Otway, the handsome, carefree, the well-beloved, who didn't appear to have an enemy in the world until he was found murdered. Margot Neville fans will be delighted with this one, especially when old friends Detective-Inspector Grogan and his sad-sack assistant, Detective-Sergeant Manning, set to work to unravel the mystery.

Death in quiet England and troubled Malaya

Book review by
AINSLIE BAKER

A CAREFUL reading of Agatha Christie's newest mystery, "A Pocket Full of Rye," leads to the sad conclusion that Miss Christie has slipped.

A barrel-full of red herrings, and her usual scrupulous regard for fair play don't make up for an almost total lack of flavor and bite.

An autopsy following the sudden death in his London office of wealthy businessman Rex Fortescue suggests that the yewberry poison that killed him was administered at his own breakfast table.

Investigations at "Yewtree Lodge" (one of fiction's least pleasing country homes) bring to light an embarrassing number of suspects, all members of the dead man's family circle.

Like Inspector Neele, you will not know whether to concentrate on Adele, Fortescue's new and considerably younger wife; the pretty housekeeper, Mary Dove; Jennifer Fortescue, the discontented daughter-in-law; or Elaine, whose love affair had recently been broken up by her father.

A macabre choice could be Miss Ramsbottom, the old lady and sister of Fortescue's first wife, who lives a life of seclusion and patience-playing in nursery quarters at the top of the house.

Fortescue's two sons, the pale and sneaky Percival, and the attractive blacksheep, Lance, make matters no easier by being away from home at the time of the first and subsequent murders.

Miss Marple, who may or may not strike you as a credible character, comes to help clear things up.

Our copy from Grahame Book Company, Sydney.

THE tense, day-by-day conflict between rubber planters and Communist guerrillas is the background for Nourma Handford's novel of present day Malaya, "Blood on the Leaves."

Miss Handford's story is of men who send their wives to live in Singapore and stay on to fight.

The simple and freely given love of the Malayan girl Kasmah makes it possible for Neil Truscott to retain his sense of proportion as the terrorist campaign grows in intensity.

But after the murder of his child, and gossip concerning his wife's behaviour in Singapore, Bellevue, on the next estate, becomes a fanatic for revenge, obsessed only with the desire to kill.

The author sees the Malays as a simple and happy people, divided between two loyalties. The first is the instinctive one to their traditional neighbors, the Malayan Chinese. The

other is to the white men who are their employers, and in some cases their friends and advisers. A novel of action rather than of ideas, its popular style and the topicality of its theme will please many readers.

Our copy from the publishers, Dymock's Book Arcade, Sydney.

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Side Show

By
GERARD BELL

Burmese jungle surrounded a small, arid plateau on to which Major Hogan led his task force of ninety. Their job—to divert and engage the Japanese while the main British force passed by on the road below and consolidated superior positions.

More than a thousand Japanese lurked hidden around the plateau, and for fifty hours that nerve-racking type of fighting known as "Diverting and Delaying Tactics" harassed and depleted the tiny company.

Written with power and sincerity, this novel is a tribute to that little-known arm of war—the "SIDE-SHOW."

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A Christmas romance with
an unexpected ending
By MAUREEN LUSON

The sack from Santa

THE spirit of Christmas pervaded the sedate office of Truegood & Nephew, General Merchants. The tree, as yet unadorned, filled the typist's room with spicy fragrance; desk drawers were a-bulge with crackling wrappings and silver tinsel; the floor was littered with red and green crepe paper scraps; holly lurked in corners; and paper chains and lanterns were heaped on the filing cabinets.

It was morning-tea time, and

most of the employees were enjoying their fifteen-minute break; only Miss Bickerstaffe, private secretary to Mr. Truegood, remained in her small office, her cup of tea beside her.

Miss Bickerstaffe did not permit refreshments to intrude upon the calm rhythm of her work; her manner was aloof and impersonal, she was efficiently beautiful as well as beautifully efficient, and she would have had dimples if she had ever smiled.

"Keeps herself to herself," sniffed Miss Waddell, the filing clerk, sipping tea with a genteelly raised little finger.

Miss Ollop, perennially thirtyish secretary to Mr. Ralph Truegood (the nephew), nodded her newly permed head vehemently. "None of us good enough for her to be friendly with," she remarked. "I just wish she'd get married and leave!"

"Gripes, I wouldn't envy her husband," grinned one of the junior clerks. "The poor bloke'd be kept in order all right."

There was a choir of giggles from the typists.

"He would, too. It hasn't been the same since Miss Gappen left," said one.

"She wasn't stuck-up like Miss B," squeaked another indignantly.

"And she never minded if you slipped off a few minutes early if you had a date," added a third feelingly.

"Mm. Nothing escapes Miss Bickerstaffe. She's got everyone taped," said the junior clerk gloomily.

"And the way she bullies poor, dear Mr. Truegood! I think perhaps we could arrange for this to be handled with less delay, Mr. Truegood!" mimicked Miss Waddell with exaggerated hauteur.

"She is hardly the type for this firm," pronounced Mr. Perkey, the head clerk, who remembered when

Mr. Truegood had been the Son of Truegood & Son. "We have always aimed to please our customers without this modern craze for speed."

"Of course, she's clever. And really quite beautiful—in a hard sort of way," conceded Miss Ollop. "When she first came, I used to wonder if Mr. Ralph—but between me and the present company, he detests her."

"He doesn't like bossy women. Quite right, too," snapped Miss Waddell, who had been disappointed in love several times.

"I often wonder if Miss B. hasn't a secret," put in a typist, thumbing her copy of "True Revelations." "A guilty one—something awful."

"Praps she's got a husband already. In gaol," propounded the office-boy, pop-eyed.

There was general laughter.

"More likely he committed suicide," smiled Miss Ollop. "When I think of poor Mr. Ralph's face after Mr. Truegood told him he'd got to be Father Christmas at the party—! And I'm certain Miss Bickerstaffe was responsible for that, because she's always contriving to foist jobs on to him—especially those she knows he hates."

"It's strange how Mr. Truegood allows himself to be influenced by Miss Bickerstaffe," ruminated Mr. Perkey. "Very strange. Mr. Truegood has been quite unlike himself lately."

"Since she came," said Miss

Ollop. "Yes, we've all noticed it. Sometimes I wonder if one of us oughtn't to—well—mention it to Mrs. Truegood. 'D'you know,' she leant forward and the others drew nearer to hear the morsel of gossip, 'he called Miss B. 'Angela' yesterday!'"

"Absurd!" Mr. Perkey asserted his male authority. "You let your imagination run away with you, Miss Ollop. I cannot listen to such insinuations. And we'd all better get back to work."

"Or Miss B. will come marching in with her self-righteous air," said Miss Waddell. "Well, I'm sure I hope the party won't be spoilt. It's always been such a jolly affair, and the kids just loved Mr. Truegood as Father Christmas. Mr. Ralph doesn't look the part—not that he isn't ever so nice-looking—but he's too sort of hawk-faced for a Father Christmas."

Everyone agreed as to Mr. Ralph's unsuitability to act the bluff and hearty saint, and then the group broke up and dispersed to its various tasks.

In his office, Mr. Ralph Truegood chewed his cold pipe and tried to concentrate on his work; but in spite of the overflowing "In" tray and the reproachfully empty "Out" one, his thoughts persisted in wandering far from consignments

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Ralph, feeling a little hot in the costume, managed to smile at Angela while she sewed on the white wool hem.



Come, My Beloved

BY
PEARL
BUCK

A TRIP to India following the death of his adored wife, LEILA, profoundly affects the life of DAVID MACARD, wealthy American industrialist, and his son DAVID.

MacARD, appalled by conditions he sees, decides to found a mission in India as a memorial to Leila, then furiously abandons the project when David decides to become one of the missionaries.

David's decision was made when OLIVIA DESSARD, whose home MacARD had purchased for a training school, refused his offer of marriage, declaring that he was too dominated by his father. He persists in his decision to become a missionary and goes to India, where he studies under the direction of the REVEREND ROBERT FORDHAM.

Later, urged by his Indian friend DARYA, he writes to Olivia again, asking her to come to India and marry him. He is so overjoyed to receive her acceptance that he can feel only momentarily annoyed when Darya admits that, at the insistence of his wife, LEILAMANI, he also had written to Olivia, urging her to accept David's proposal. NOW READ ON.

OLIVIA stood at early dawn and gazed upon the shores of India. The sky was flushing pink over Bombay, the many lights were growing dim in the light of the rising sun, and the sinking moon changed to a dead silver. A faint mist rose from the harbor and softened the outlines of the distant buildings.

From it rose the massed outline of an old fort or castle, she could not tell which. The rosy mists, the pallid moon, the glow of new sunlight mingled to cast an atmosphere of mystery over the land.

The ship had anchored some two miles off shore, for the waters of the harbor were shallow, the captain had told her, and launches were coming to take the baggage and the passengers ashore.

She heard a man's voice call as he passed. It was a young officer. "Ready, Miss Dessard?" He was an Englishman, and he yearned vaguely over the handsome American girl who was going out to marry a missionary. In intervals of a ball one night he had tried to probe as delicately as he could the mystery of this young woman.

"I can only hope you will persuade your fiancé to leave that tragic country," he had said.

He was an Oxonian, a young man who hoped to better himself, one of England's innumerable younger sons who were sent to India to find fortune if not fame.

"But you don't leave India," Olivia had said rather too astutely.

"Ah, but India's our job," the young Englishman had declared. "Besides," he added after a half moment's thought, "it's so hopeless being a missionary, you know, really it is. And only the worst Indians turn Christian."

To this Olivia had said nothing, the music had begun again and she rose. She loved to dance and she knew that in Poona there would be no more of it. It had been lovely dancing on the ship, the rise and fall of the sea made one feel lighter than air.

"Quite ready," she said calmly.

"Well, goodbye and good luck," the young officer said, and he put out his hand.

It was a final farewell to more than himself, and Olivia had felt it so.

"Goodbye," she said, just touching his hand.

She stepped aboard the launch an hour later, her mother following, and they left the ship behind. The launch churned the water into foam and the small Indian craft rocked on the waves.

"Sit down, Mamma," she commanded, and Mrs. Dessard sat down, a quiet grey-clad figure, her withered face anxious under her white straw hat. After insisting that she could not possibly go to India, at the last agitated moment she had decided that neither could she possibly allow Olivia to come so far to marry a man she scarcely knew.

She had not enjoyed a moment of the journey, and she was not cheerful even yet. She had heard that India was hot and she hated heat and was afraid of snakes. Once Olivia was properly married, she would go home at once.

Olivia did not sit down. She stood at the rail and stared at the dock, coming nearer so

quickly, and the glare of the sun stung her eyeballs.

She had risen at dawn, but how quickly the sun had driven away the mysterious beauty of the early morning!

The island upon which Bombay was built rose gleaming across the water and its outlines quivered in a haze of heat. Around the launch plunging now towards the land, a brisk hot wind dashed the water into small blue waves, white-tipped.

Mrs. Dessard sat on a deck-chair in silence, gazing doubtfully shoreward, and Olivia, too, was silent. A few minutes more and she would see David. The first sight was important, but she must not let it be all-important, for it was too late now for change or return. Indeed, there was nothing to which she cared to return.

Then she saw him on the dock. He stood, tall and singular, motionless, rigid, shining white in his linen suit and sun helmet among the vivid, swarming people. She leaned over the rail, waving her green silk scarf, and he saw her and lifted his helmet.

They stood looking at each other across the moving multitude and the narrowing water, searching for what they could not yet see. Had he changed? She thought he had. He looked much taller, or had she only forgotten, or was it the strange white suit? He had grown a brown beard and, though it was trimmed closely to a point, it made him look very different from the young man she remembered. He was much older, his face looked dark, but that was the beard.

He stood motionless now, his hands clasped in front of him while the launch edged against the dock. But the moment the gang-plank was fixed he came forward and she stood waiting, and for the first time her heart began to beat suddenly and quickly. She had really committed herself and her life not only to David but to India, a man and a country she did not know.

She turned her back to the shore and leaned against the rail. It was hot, the wind had died suddenly. The green linen of the travelling dress hugged her body too close and the narrow brim of her straw hat did not shield her face against the sun. But if she moved away he might not find her in the crowd and so she waited, although it was only for a few minutes, and almost too soon, before she had time to still her heart, she saw his white figure threading its way among the people who pushed on the deck, the porters, the hotel agents, the English come to meet friends.

He came to her simply and it seemed to her not shyly, and he bent and kissed her cheek. She felt the brush of his soft beard on her face, she saw the kindling of his dark eyes. He took her hand and held it hard.

"Olivia—darling—"

"David!"

It was impossible to say more in the midst of the crowd; they stood holding hands, looking at each other but not quite fully, for Mrs. Dessard came towards them.

"David, I'm very glad to see you. It's been a fearfully long trip. Heavens, so this is India!"

She shook hands with him and waved her hand towards the shore. "What a lot of people!"

"There are a lot of people wherever you go in India," David agreed. "One gets used to it. They are very good, actually, very friendly, that is. Where are the bags, Olivia? We'll have to get them through Customs."

He motioned to a man from the Grand Hotel, where he had taken rooms; the man came forward, and David directed him calmly. Yes, Olivia thought, watching him. David was changed. He was self-assured, almost a little too superior in manner, she thought; the old diffidence was gone, and with it something of the touching charm. He was more of a man, and that, perhaps, she would like.

Did she love him? It was hard to tell all in a moment, now that he was changed. Perhaps she could love him easily. It was

A little distance away, Leilamani sat watching Olivia with intent interest.



Fourth instalment of our splendid eight-part serial

exciting, this marrying someone she did not quite know.

"We had better get out of this sun," David said with quiet authority. "I have a carriage waiting just outside the dock. We can go to the hotel and when you are settled, Mrs. Dessard, we can discuss plans. I hope you will want to get to Poona as soon as possible, Olivia. Everybody is expecting you, and for me the waiting has seemed very long."

"You young people must decide," Mrs. Dessard said. The sun was hot indeed and she felt little rills of perspiration running down the sides of her face.

They followed David. He had given their keys to the agent, and the bags, he told them, were safe enough.

"Indians are not more honest than other men," he observed as they walked along, "but once you have entrusted something to an Indian he will be honest at least until the job is done."

Olivia was a stranger, he thought; she had changed and she was more beautiful and she was older. Would he have the courage the moment they were alone to kiss her as he had dreamed of doing?

The kiss as he had dreamed it was to be exchanged when they met, but it had been impossible either to give or to receive in the midst of the crowd, and certainly, too, he would not give Olivia his first kiss before Mrs. Dessard. Nevertheless, he was not going to wait either until they reached Poona. Mrs. Fordham had been very stern with him about love.

"Indians are not used to our freedom between the sexes," she had declared. "It is extremely important that you are never seen alone with your fiancée. For that reason I do think the wedding should take place as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, please, no demonstrations—no fondling or—or kisses!"

The carriage was waiting and he helped Mrs. Dessard into it, and then Olivia, and then he took his place, and he found her firm, small hand and held it under the covering of her full green skirt. She was cool and beautiful in green, the heat did not change her lovely pallor, and her straw hat shaded her dark eyes.

He felt a suffocation about his heart as they sat side by side, her slender thigh pressed delicately against him, and, to restrain his love, which must not be spoken or shown, not yet, he began to talk about the streets through which they passed, the people they saw in their many costumes, Hindus, Moslems, Parsees, black Jews.

But all the time he was talking for Mrs. Dessard he was passionately caressing Olivia's hand, his fingers searching the palm, pressing its softness, and she sat motionless, not hearing what he said, gazing about and seeing nothing, for all her attention, all her consciousness were fixed upon their joined hands and his searching fingers.

"I'll just rest for a few minutes," Olivia murmured, leaning back with closed eyes against the cushions.

and she did not know whether she liked it. Still, she did not draw her hand away.

He found his moment; he seized it upstairs in the hotel, when Mrs. Dessard was in her room directing the disposal of the bags. He threw open the door into the next room.

"This is your room, Olivia, and mine is on the next floor."

Then he pushed the door, though not quite shut, and behind it he took her in his arms at last and kissed her on the mouth, a kiss as long and deep as his dreams, his first true kiss.

"Olivia!" Mrs. Dessard called. "Where are you? The man wants to bring in your bags."

She tore herself away. "Here, Mamma!"

But there was time for them to exchange a look so ardent, so rich with promise, that her head swam. She was always quick to decide, quick to know. Yes, she was going to fall in love. Everything was all right, and India was glorious.

Upstairs in his own room, the porter paid off and the door locked, David fell upon his knees in wordless worship. There was no sin loving Olivia and God would understand. He who had created them male and female, husband and wife. Yet such happiness must not absorb his heart and his mind. At first it would be hard, but he would learn to control even love, for Christ's sake. The dream had been terrifying in its sweet power, but the reality was more sweet and strong. Olivia was lovelier than he had remembered her.

He sent up his wordless plea for strength; he forced his mind to dwell upon Christ, and then this occurred to him, which he had never thought of before: Christ, that member of the triple godhead, the only One of Three who had ever once been man, and so to whom he most naturally made his prayer, had died, had returned again to heaven, but never had He known the love of woman. His prayer wavered, lost its wings, and fell to earth again.

Illustrated by
BOOTHROYD

No, he could not ask for help to love Olivia less. He must love God more until the greater love would rule his being. That was his task—not less love, but more.

He tried to tell her something like this in the evening of that day. She wanted to walk; she was eager to see the streets, and so they left the hotel and he led their way to the shores of Back Bay. The sun had already set, but there was a bar of red across the sea horizon, and the grey tide was thundering in upon the shore. The green heights of Malabar Hill were still clear, though fading into the quick twilight.

The great city clock struck the hour of seven and people were leaving the sands. Parsee priests in long white robes stood gazing towards the last light of the sun, not heeding the people about them, and English men and women walked homeward along the shore, while the white children played, reluctant to let the day go.

"If I seem aloof sometimes," David told Olivia while they stood hand in hand upon the shore, their faces towards the sunset, "it isn't that my love fails. It is simply that there are tasks of consecration which demand my whole attention and my heart."

"I shan't mind," Olivia said with composure.

Across the rolling seas the evening star shone out suddenly, golden, soft, and clear.

A week later they were married. The little Poona church was filled with whispering, stat-

ing Indian Christians sitting as usual on the floor, but packed so closely together that the path to the altar was narrow indeed. Olivia walked up the aisle and if she saw the faces at her feet, or the faces at the windows, she gave no sign. Her mother walked beside her, and David waited at the altar, Darya standing beside him, and Mr. Fordham stood in his robe of service.

Olivia was very pale, she moved with dignity, and David, mindful of the Indians, did not look at her after one swift glance as she entered. She, also warned, held her head bent slightly beneath the short veil.

Mrs. Fordham played the little organ softly until she heard Olivia's step upon the chancel and then she let the reedy music die away and Mr. Fordham's solemn, nasal voice began the sacred words. Mrs. Dessard wept a little, her handkerchief to her lips.

"Who giveth this woman—" Mr. Fordham was intoning.

"I do," Mrs. Dessard sobbed. Well, it was Olivia's business. The Fordhams were common people and it did not

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The dog that travelled *INCOGNITO*

LOOK what a lovely day we have for sailing," I said, pointing my pen towards the sunlit greenery outside the open window.

Birds sang in trees and the sun shone on a pack of brightly colored baggage tags that I was filling out. Under S.S. America I had carefully lettered my name, and I answered the gay question Destination? with Cherbourg.

I was about to fill out a new tag when I noticed Barbara's silence. I looked up at her. She was standing at the window looking at me. I remembered that on the day before she had said something about a dog; but I had been called away before I could talk about it at length.

For the most part, Barbara is a sweet and normal child. When she wants something, she changes. I looked at her now and clearly saw the symptoms of wanting something, symptoms long known to me and always the same. I recognised the first stage of a painful condition that overcomes her from time to time.

I saw that this time it would be very grave and complicated. I could tell it by her eyes, her mouth, the position she stood in, the peculiar angles of her arms and legs. She was twisted in an unhappy pose of indecision.

Not that she didn't know precisely what she wanted. Barbara was merely undecided about how to

broach the subject. There was a long and cold silence.

At this point the child is always under great stress. A trembling of the lower lip precedes the filling of the beautiful eyes with tears. I am allowed to see these hopeless eyes for a moment, and then, as a spotlight moves from one place to another, she averts her gaze and slowly turns, folds her arms and looks into the distance or, if there is no distance, at the wall.

The crisis is approaching. She swallows, but her throat is constricted. Finally, with the urgency of a stammerer and with her small hands clenched, she manages to say a few dry words. Her voice is like a cold trumpet; the last word is a choking sound.

This morning—the morning we were sailing—the attack was particularly severe. After the silence, the tears, and the gaze into the distance, Barbara blurted out: "You promised I could have a dog."

I steeled myself and answered, "Yes, when we get back from Europe you can have a dog."

An answer like that is worse than an outright no. The mood of "I wish I were dead" descended on Barbara. She stared, coldly out of the window, and then she turned and limply dragged herself down the corridor to her room, where she goes at times of crisis. She closed the door, not by slamming it but with a terrible, slow finality.

From the corridor I could see how

she let go of the doorknob inside. In an unspeakably dolorous fashion, the knob slowly turned, and there was a barely audible click of the mechanism. It was a cutting off of human relations, a falling off of appetite, and nothing of joy or disaster in all the world mattered to her.

Ordinarily this comatose state lasts for weeks. In this case, however, Barbara was confronted with a deadline, for the ship was sailing at five that afternoon, and it was now eleven in the morning. I usually break down after three or four weeks of resistance. The time limit for this operation was five hours.

For a while she continued to follow the manual of standard practice, which I know like the alphabet. From the door at the end of the corridor came the sound of heart-breaking sobs.

Normally these sobs last for a good while; and then, the crisis ebbing, there follows an hour or two of real or simulated sleep, in which she gathers strength for new efforts. This time, however, the sobs were discontinued ahead of schedule.

There was a period of total silence, during which I knew she was plotting at the speed of a calculating machine. This took about ten minutes. Then the door opened again and, fatefully and slowly, as the condemned walk to their place of execution, the poor child, handkerchief in hand, dragged along the corridor and passed me in phantom-

like silence and, in a wide half-circle, passed into the kitchen.

I never knew until that morning that pouring milk into a glass could be a bitter and hopeless thing to watch.

I am as hardened to the heart-break routine as a coroner is to post-mortems. I can be blind to tears and deaf to the most urgent pleading. I said, "Please be reasonable. I promise you that the moment we get back you can have a dog."

I was not prepared for what followed: the new slant, the surprise attack. She leaned against the kitchen doorframe and drank the last of the milk. Her mouth was ringed with white. Then she said in measured and accusing tones: "You read in the papers this morning what they did in Albany?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"They passed a law that all institutions like the S.P.C.A. are forced to turn dogs over to hospitals for vivisection—and you know what will happen. They'll get him, and then they'll cut him open and sew him up again, over and over, until he's dead."

"What has that got to do with me?"

"It has to do with the dog you promised me."

"What dog?"

"The dog that Frances wants to give me."

Frances is a red-headed girl who goes to school with Barbara.

"I didn't know Frances had a dog."

Barbara raised her eyebrows. "You never listen," she said with weary gestures as if she were talking to an idiot.

Poppy, I told you all about it a dozen times. Dr. Lincoln—that's Frances' father—is going to Saudi Arabia to work for an oil company, and he had to sign a paper agreeing not to take a dog, because it seems the Arabs don't like dogs.

"So the dog has to be got rid of. So Dr. Lincoln said, 'If you don't get rid of it, I will.' Now you know how doctors are. They have no feelings whatever for animals. He'll give it to some hospital for experiments."

I resumed filling out baggage tags.

When I hear the word dog I think of a reasonably large animal of no particular breed, uncertain in outline like a Thurbur dog, and with a rough, dark coat. This image hovered in my mind when I asked, "What kind of a dog is it?"

"It's name is Little Bit."

"What?"

"Little Bit, that's its name. It's the dearest, sweetest, snow-white, it's bitsy toy poodle you have ever seen. Can I have it, please?"

I almost let out a shrill bark.

"Wait till you see him and all the things he's got—a special little wicker bed with a mattress, and he has a dish with his picture on it, and around it is written Always Faithful, in French. You see, Poppy, they got him in Paris last year, and he's the unique, sharpest little dog you have ever seen, and Frances says she's not going to give him to anybody but me."

I was playing for time. I would have settled for a Corgi, a Yorkshire, a Weimaraner, even a German boxer or a Mexican hairless, but Little Bit was too much.

I knew that Dr. Lincoln lived some thirty miles out of New York and that it would be impossible for him to get the dog to New York before the ship sailed.

"Where is the dog now?" I asked.

"He'll be here any minute, Poppy. Frances is on the way with him now. And, oh, wait till you see, he has the cutest little boots for rainy weather, and a cashmere sweater, sea-green, and several sets of leashes and collars. You won't have to buy anything for him."

"All right," I said, "you can have him. We'll put him in a good kennel until we get back."

The symptoms, well known and always the same, returned again; the lower lip trembled. "Kennel," she said—and there is no actress on the stage who could have weighted this word with more reproach and misery.

"Yes, kennel," I said, and I filled out the baggage tag for my portable typewriter.

"Poppy," she began, but I got up and said, "Now, look, Barbara,



A hilarious adventure on the high seas

By **LUDWIG BEMELMANS**

the ship leaves in a few hours, and to take a dog aboard you have to get a certificate from a veterinary and reserve a place for him, and buy a ticket."

To my astonishment, Barbara smiled indulgently and said, "Well, if that's all that is bothering you—first of all, the French, unlike the English, have no quarantine for dogs, and Little Bit already has a certificate."

"Second, you can make all the arrangements for the dog's passage on board ship, after it sails. Third, there is plenty of room in the ship's kennels. I know all this, because Frances and I went down to the U.S. Lines and got this information the day before yesterday."

At such times I feel for the boy who will some day marry Barbara. With all hope failing, I said, "But we'll have to get a travelling bag or something to put the dog in."

"He has a lovely little travelling bag with his name lettered on it, Little Bit."

The name stung like a whip. "All right, then," I wrote an extra baggage tag for the dog's bag.

Barbara wore a smug smile of success. "Wait till you see him," she said, and she ran downstairs.

She returned with Frances, who, I am sure, had been sitting there waiting all the time.

Little Bit had shoe-button eyes and a patent-leather nose and a strawberry-colored collar. He was fluffy from the top of his head to his shoulders and then shorn like a miniature Persian lamb. At the end of a stub of a tail was a puff of fluff, and there were other puffs on his four legs. He wore a red ribbon, and a bell on his collar. I thought that sawdust would come out of him if he were cut open.

A real dog moves about a room and sniffs his way into corners; he inspects furniture and people and

makes notes of things. Little Bit stood with cock-sparrow stiffness on four legs, as static as his stare.

He was picked up and brought over to me; and I think he knew exactly what I thought of him, for he lifted his tiny lip on the left side of his face, up over his mouse-like teeth, and sneered. He was put down, and he danced on stilts, with the motion of a mechanical toy, back to Frances.

I was shown the travelling-bag, which was like one of the pocket-books that Wags carry.

"We don't need that tag," Barbara said. "I'll carry him in this. Look." She opened the pocketbook, which had a circular opening with a wire screen on both ends for breathing purposes. Little Bit jumped into it, and she closed it. "You see, he won't be any bother whatever."

She opened the bag again, and, with a standing jump, Little Bit hurdled its handles. He stalked towards me and, tilting his head a little, looked up at me, and then he again lifted his lip over his small fangs.

"Oh, look, Barbara," said Frances. "Little Bit likes your father; he's smiling at him." I had an impulse to sneer back, but instead I took the baggage tags and began to attach them to the luggage.

I left the room then, for now Frances showed signs of crisis; her eyes were filling, and the heartbreak was too much for me.

Little Bit was less emotional. He ate a hearty meal from his *Tonjourn* Fidele dish. Then he inspected the house, tinkling about with the small bell that hung from his patent-leather collar.

It was time to leave for the boat. The baggage was taken to a taxi, and Little Bit hopped into his bag. On the way to the boat I thought about the things I had forgotten to take care of, and also about Little Bit.

It is said that there are three

kinds of books that are always a success; they are: a book about a doctor, a book about a dog. Well, now I had Dr. Lincoln's dog, but the situation didn't seem to hold the elements of anything except chagrin.

I wondered if Lincoln ever had had a dog, or a doctor, or if Lincoln's doctor had a dog; I wondered if that side of Lincoln, perhaps the last remaining side, had been investigated yet or was still open.

We arrived with Dr. Lincoln's dog at the Customs barrier, our passports were checked, and the baggage was brought aboard. In the cabin we found some friends. Little Frances, with Barbara and Little Bit, looking out of his bag, inspected the ship.

The gong sounded, and the deck steward sang, "All ashore that's going ashore." The passengers lined up to wave their farewells. The last of those that were going ashore hurried down the gangplank (good-bye, good-bye!), and then the engine bells sounded below, and the tugs moaned and hissed, and the ship backed out into the river.

There are few sights in the world as beautiful as a trip down the Hudson and out to sea, especially at dusk. I was on deck until we were in Ambrose Channel, and then I went down into the cabin.

Little Bit was lying on the writing desk, on a blotter, and watching Barbara's hand. She was writing a letter to Frances, describing the beauty of travel and Little Bit's reactions. "Isn't he the best travelling dog we've ever had, Poppy?"

The cabins aboard the America are the only ones I have ever been in that don't seem to be aboard ship. They are large—like rooms in a country home—a little chintzy in decoration. The portholes are curtained, and in back of the curtains, one suspects, screened doors lead

out to a porch and a Connecticut lawn rather than the ocean.

I put my things in place and changed to a comfortable jacket, and then I said, "I guess I'd better go up and get this dog business settled."

"It's all attended to, Poppy. I took care of it," said Barbara, and she continued writing.

"Well, then, you'd better take him upstairs to the kennels now. It's almost dinnertime."

"He doesn't have to go to the kennels."

"Now, look, Barbara—"

"See for yourself, Poppy. Ring for the steward, or let me ring for him."

"Yes, sir," said the steward, smiling.

"Is it all right for the dog to stay in the cabin?" I asked. The steward had one of the most honest and kind faces I have ever seen.

He didn't fit on a ship either. He was more like a person that works around horses, or a gardener. He had bright eyes and squint lines, a leathery skin, and a good smile.

He closed his eyes and said, "Dog? I don't see no dog in here, sir." He winked like a burlesque comedian and touched one finger to his head in salute. "My name is Jeff," he said. "If you want anything . . ."

and then he was gone. "You see," said Barbara. "And besides, you save fifty dollars, and coming back another fifty, which makes a hundred."

I am sure that Little Bit understood every word of the conversation. He stood up on the blotter and tilted his head, listening to Barbara.

She said to him, "Now you know, Little Bit, you're not supposed to be on this ship at all. You mustn't allow anybody to see you. Now, you hide while we eat."

There was a knock at the door. Little Bit jumped to the floor, and he was out of sight.

Barbara gave a piercing scream as I threw the dog in a wide curve out into the sea while Hoegeli looked in astonishment.

It was the steward. He brought a little raw meat mixed with string beans on a plate and covered with another plate. "Yes, sir," was all he said.

After he left we took the bell off Little Bit's collar as a precaution.

Barbara was asleep when the first rapport between me and Little Bit took place. I was sitting on a couch, reading, when he came into my cabin. By some magic trick, like an elevator going up a shaft, he ascended and sat down next to me.

He kept a hand's-width away, tilted his head, and then lifted his lip over the left side of his face. I think I smiled back at him in the same fashion. I looked at him with interest for the first time.

He was embarrassed, he looked away and then suddenly changed position, stretching his front legs ahead and sitting down flat on his hind legs. He made several jerky movements but never uttered a sound.

Barbara's sleepy voice came from the other room: "Aren't you glad we've got Little Bit with us?"

"Yes," I said, "I am."

I thought about the miracles of nature; that this tough little lion in sheep's pelt functioned as he did, with a brain that could be no larger than an olive; that he had memory, understanding, tact, courage, and, no doubt, loyalty, and that he was completely self-sufficient.

He smiled once more, and I smiled back: the relationship was

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Christmas Surprise

A short short story by
GEORGE JOSEPH

ALAN TOYNBEE edged away from the hurrying, laughing parade on the pavement. He stood wearily near the door of Taylor's Store. Reflected in the window he could see the dancing, jostling crowds hurrying along, parcels piled high in their arms.

Last Christmas—just 12 months ago—he had been one of those care-free shoppers. Then a month later his world had crashed about him. The company whose secretary he had been for five years had plunged into unexpected liquidation and, after a sensational trial, its directors had been sentenced to imprisonment.

Then had commenced for Alan Toynbee a heartrending search for work. But no one seemed to require a secretary, especially one who had graduated with the unfortunate company which had formerly employed him.

His savings were almost gone. There was enough left for an economical existence of perhaps a month—certainly nothing for Christmas presents. At the end of that month there would commence the sale of their little home.

And just 12 months ago he and Alice, without a care in the world, had filled Peter's stocking together.

He sighed and was about to turn away from the shop window when an idea struck him. Taylor's were very busy during the Christmas weeks. Perhaps they required another shop assistant. A pound or two would make a vital difference to their Christmas—Alice's, Peter's, and his. With heightened color he entered the shop.

Mr. Taylor was a stout little man with friendly eyes behind thick spectacles. His beaming smile froze a little as Toynbee stated his quest.

"I'm sorry," said Mr. Taylor, "but we're fully staffed."

The other turned to go. Perhaps it was the pathetic droop of the young man's shoulders, but Mr. Taylor took a pace towards him.

"Oh, one moment," he said. Toynbee turned hopefully towards him.

"There is a job you can fill for a few weeks." He hesitated and coughed apologetically. "As you know, we've a Santa Claus in our toy department. We had to get rid of the gentleman who plays the part, on account of—er—inebriation. Would you like the job?"

Toynbee smiled wryly.

"I don't know," he said. "Anything will do, but what kind of Santa Claus would I make?"

"Very good, I should say," smiled Mr. Taylor, surveying the well-knit figure of the young man before him.

"A white beard will make a world of difference."

So Toynbee found himself engaged as Mr. Taylor's Santa Claus at twelve pounds a week for three weeks.

Alice was waiting for him at the gate of their home, the little home that he and Alice loved so well. A pang came to the man's heart as he saw the faint lines about the lovely eyes of his wife. She had been a brick, never complaining, always greeting him with a smile.

"I've got a job for three weeks," he cried, infusing more enthusiasm into his voice than he felt.

Her eyes danced with joy.



Sadly Alan watched the happy crowds hurrying along, their arms piled high with parcels.

"Oh, Alan," she breathed. "It's—er—clerking for a stock-broking firm," he lied.

"It may be permanent when they find out how good you are."

Toynbee smiled a little bitterly.

"You never know," he said. "It—it's only worth twelve pounds a week," he added.

"But it's a job, dear," said Alice brightly.

There was a scurry of footsteps and a tiny avalanche launched itself at the man's legs. With a shout, he threw the gleefully chortling Peter high into the air.

"Getting ready for Santa Claus, Peter?" cried Toynbee, returning the little fellow to earth.

"Yes." Four-year-old Peter nodded his head gravely. "Peter wants Santa to bring him a rocking-horse."

Toynbee and Alice exchanged a glance.

"When Daddy gets a job, you'll get your rocking-horse," promised Alice.

"When Daddy gets . . ." The little fellow repeated the words slowly and then with a cry of glee, "Santa Claus will bring Daddy a job."

Coming towards him he saw Alice and wide-eyed Peter. He pinched the part of his scarlet cloak on which he sat. It hurt, so he was awake. Alice was smiling. She halted before the throne and Peter raised his awed eyes to Santa Claus.

Toynbee found that the job of Santa Claus was not very difficult. All day he sat on a gilt throne while an endless parade of awed children accompanied by parents passed before him. He listened gravely to the Christmas wishes of the little ones.

He enjoyed it all. The days passed quite quickly. Mr. Taylor stood near Santa's throne because, he told Toynbee, he loved children. At the end of the first week, Mr. Taylor told Toynbee that he was well satisfied with him.

On Christmas Eve the parade of children seemed longer and denser than ever. Mr. Taylor stood near the throne, beaming and nodding his head like a jovial Buddha. Toynbee's roars of laughter and nods of assent became mechanical after a while. Then his eyes goggled.

"Sorry to take your beard off," he said. Toynbee nodded his head. "The little boy . . ."

"Is my son," the other completed the sentence.

"I see," said Mr. Taylor awkwardly, and then added with

"Tell Santa Claus what you wish him to bring you, dear," prompted Alice as Toynbee had heard thousands of parents prompt. "A rocking-horse," she whispered.

Little Peter's mouth moved and at last the words came clearly.

"Bring Daddy a job, Santa Claus," he cried and, with half a sob, "I don't want a rocking-horse."

Toynbee's eyes smarted. A sudden pain came to his throat.

"Unfortunate, that," commented Mr. Taylor sotto voce.

The parade went on.

At last Toynbee wearily entered Mr. Taylor's office to draw his final salary.

"Glad it's over?" beamed Mr. Taylor.

"No," said Toynbee. "It was a job, anyway."

The other cleared his throat.

"Sorry to take your beard off," he said. Toynbee nodded his head.

"The little boy . . ."

"Is my son," the other completed the sentence.

"I see," said Mr. Taylor awkwardly, and then added with

apparent irrelevance, "I haven't any children of my own." Toynbee made a sympathetic noise in his throat. "I thought it was very sweet of him to ask something for you."

"He's a wonderful little boy," said the other huskily.

"What kind of job did you have?" asked Mr. Taylor.

The other told him.

"That's strange," mused Mr. Taylor. "Mason, who has been our secretary for 25 years, is retiring at the end of the year." His eyes rested measurably on Toynbee, whose heart missed a beat. He felt himself becoming weak at the knees. "I'll give you a trial, young man," decided Mr. Taylor.

"Give me a trial!" breathed Toynbee, his eyes glowing. He seized Mr. Taylor's hand. "You won't be sorry, sir." He leapt towards the door. "I'm going to buy a rocking-horse," he cried.

"You needn't bother," said Mr. Taylor. "I've already sent one to your address. It seems that I'm Santa Claus, as well as you."

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THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY—December 30, 1953



H elpless little thing

BETSY posed in the latest kind of bathing-suit, one of those with the romper effect that only the very young and very slim can wear. Her hair was concealed under a bathing-cap which framed her piquant face.

She stood before a leafless apple tree, ready to dive into a bed of very dead petunias, desperately trying not to shiver and hoping that Tim Hammond wouldn't notice her goose pimples.

Tim, of course, would leave out the apple tree and the petunias, substituting his own recollection of a midsummer swimming-pool, shining blue and gold in a hot, hot sun. She sneezed.

"Hey!" he said. "Not cold, are you?"

"Oh, no, no! It's really very warm for the time of the year. But I sneeze when I'm nervous."

Intently he studied his sketch pad. He commented absently, "What are you nervous about?"

"Oh, nothing. But I'm a girl. Girls get nervous for no reason."

"I suppose so. . . . Get on your toes again, Betsy, d'you mind?"

She could tell him she was a girl, and even then he wouldn't grasp the fact. To him she was just an interesting arrangement of lines and curves that he could take sharp, quick squints at and then transfer to his drawing-pad.

He wasn't even vaguely aware of her as a living, breathing creature who was so much in love with him it was almost beyond her power to endure.

But she made no protest. She got on her toes again, and he finished the sketch. Wrapping her half-frozen arms round herself, she admired the drawing, admitting that it was one of the best he had done.

Then they went into the house and she dashed upstairs to put on the

warmest green woollen dress in her wardrobe. When she came down he was waiting for her at the foot of the stairs, leaning contentedly against the wall. "What about some coffee?" he asked. "And a sandwich. I'm hungry."

For three months Tim Hammond had been coming in almost every day for Betsy's coffee and sandwiches.

"When I was a girl," Betsy's mother had observed, "I didn't get courted in my own kitchen."

Betsy had turned scarlet. "I'm not being courted."

"Then in heaven's name what is it?"

"Friendship! A wonderful, wonderful friendship!"

Marcia considered her daughter benignly.

By
**JOSEPHINE
BENTHAM**

"Now that's an interesting new custom," she said. "At your age I simply couldn't be bothered with friends."

"Then, if you'll excuse my saying so, Mother, you must have been a pretty frivolous and flighty sort of person."

"Oh, I made a point of it!"

"Well, young people are different now. They're more serious."

Marcia Sayres permitted herself a small, reminiscent grin. "We were serious enough, my pet. After all, we got our men, didn't we?"

At the time Betsy had put the conversation out of her mind. After all, it was just the sort of inconse-

quential chatter she was likely to get from any member of her family.

But it came back to her now as wistfully she watched Tim attacking his third cup of coffee. Was he never going to imagine himself in a kitchen of his own—with Betsy cooking for him in his sweet and gentle old age? Apparently not. He was grinning at her in his usual brotherly way.

"Betsy, I haven't told you the big news."

A cold hand clutched her heart. Had he met someone? Anyone?

"What," she asked steadily, "is her name?"

"Whose name?"

"This girl."

"What girl?"

"Oh, I thought you'd met one. Possibly?"

"Why?"

"Well, after all, you could have, couldn't you?"

"Look," he said, "let's start all over again. I'm trying to tell you about a job I might land for myself. That's more important than any girl I ever heard of. . . . You know how it is, Betsy—if I don't make good as a commercial artist before the end of the year, I go smack into Dad's office. What horror, as the French say—and as I say. Well, I've got to show my old man I can paint, and no mistake about it."

"Oh, you'll certainly show him!" cried Betsy. "Who's the job with?"

"Whom," you mean," he said, reaching for another sandwich.

"Whom's the job with? Colin Norris."

"And whom's he? Oh, sometimes you get me mixed up! Who, I mean?"

Tim sighed. "It's a pity you're so badly educated. I always have to explain everything. Colin Norris,

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**For Tim she was just the most perfect model
... for Betsy he was the only boy she wanted.**

First Noel

Prize-winning Christmas story in the religious short story quest launched by the Literary Guild of St. Mark's Church, Granville, N.S.W. It is the first published story of the winner, Stuart Marshall, of Brisbane.

THE shallow, clear waters of the brook danced and chuckled over the shiny pebbles. The soft breeze rippled its cheery surface. Mary's high treble broke out with the sheer joy of living. The brook was laughing with her because it was such a grand day.

Her day. She was all of five years old. No more four and not even a little bit of six. Five. Just a whole five. Five seemed very old. Of course, she wasn't as old as Daddy and Mummy. They were very old. Well, not so old, but they seemed old.

Perhaps it was because they worked so hard at the inn. Perhaps it was because Mummy was so tiny and always so busy, and Daddy so big. Perhaps, Daddy looked old perhaps because he had such a big beard. An enormous beard. He seemed all beard, beard and smiling like the brook—that was Daddy.

Mary splashed her feet in the brook. Gay mirth rippled over the fields undulating in vivid green waves crested with bright wild flowers.

My! she thought, the water is cold but nice. Nice like Uncle Paul. Not that he was cold. Oh, no, he was strong and warm. Warm like his lambs when she touched their soft wool.

Lamb? Her lamb!

Mary cast anxious eyes to the edge of the brook. She scampered to the grass and picked up her lamb. It was very tiny. She could cuddle it in the palm of her hand. Uncle Paul had made it for her; he had carved it out of wood as he sat on the hills with his sheep. The lamb had wool on it.

Real wool! Uncle Paul had put it on his very self. He had put in the pretty blue eyes, too. She had given him the eyes. They were little blue pebbles she had found in the brook. The eyes were like her own, Uncle Paul had said. Blue as the sky and as lovely.

This morning when he'd given her the lamb for her birthday and she'd cried with joy till she couldn't see his kind face, he'd caught her in his strong arms and tossed her in the air.

It had been thrilling to be tossed in the air, and he'd said, "Ah! You are the one, pretty little lamb. You are the one." Of course, she wasn't a little lamb, but it must be nice to be "you are the one," because Uncle Paul said it in such a nice, kind way.

Mary tucked her tiny lamb into the front of her robe and picked up from the grass her precious box. It was only a small box, but it was beautifully carved with pictures of King David and of Joseph and of Moses and of Ruth and of—oh! hosts of others. She knew all about them. She heard at the Synagogue every Sabbath all about the great men and women of her people who had lived ages and ages ago.

Daddy had visited a friend of his—oh, a long, long way away. Well, it seemed a long, long way. This friend, Joseph, a carpenter, had made the box for her birthday. It was very kind of him and she must thank him when she met him.

When Daddy had given her the box she had come to the brook and filled it with the prettiest pebbles. Now it was full. Not quite full. She had filled it and then discovered that when she shook it, it made no noise. So she had taken out some of the pebbles and now the box sang for her.

Mary put the box close to her ear and shook it. The pebbles sang in the box. She kept rattling the box, listening to the music as she skipped towards the village.

There was noise and excitement on the road. She didn't know quite what it was all about, but it seemed that a king, a Roman, said all the people must go back for a while to their own towns and villages for some reason, a funny reason, it didn't matter what,

and the people had to obey or the Roman soldiers would make them.

Anyway, her sleepy village was now buzzing and humming with noise and gossip just like the bees among the wild flowers in the fields. And it was grand fun! The noise! The confusion! The color!

She had received many birthday presents, and Daddy had given her ear-drops. Lovely ear-drops. Just like the ones he said Ruth had worn so many years ago. And Mummy had given her a new robe. It was red, white, and blue, like the colors in the tents with which her people had wandered about ages and ages ago.

She scampered into the inn yard. Her parents were in serious discussion with a tall, strong-faced, plainly dressed man, but it was the girl standing wearily by the ass who claimed little Mary's attention.

She was tall, her neck slim, and massed above her beautiful face was soft golden hair which had drifted from under her shawl. She wore no jewellery, except that her robe was pinned above her breasts with a six-pointed star—the Star of David. Her robe was warm brown, flecked with gold. Her eyes were a dark blue and rested gently and then smiled across at little Mary. Blue like mine, thought Mary, shyly returning the smile. When I grow up I want to be pretty like her.

The jovial inn-keeper was not smiling. He was tugging at his beard and blinking his eyes. Mary, wondering what it was all about, thought he might cry any minute. She listened while they discussed accommodation, and soon learned that her father was distressed because there was no place for his friend Joseph to stay—no, not in the village nor at the inn.

Mary began to glow with excitement. Here was the very Joseph who had made her carved box. She must soon thank him, and she must find him a place to stay.

Suddenly she went across to tug at her mother's robe. Her mother looked down gravely at her while she explained with quaint courtesy, "There was the stable where she often played when it was wet or snowing. Perhaps—"

Relief lightened her mother's face, but her father flung up his hands in horror. The stable was not good enough for his friend Joseph. Friend Joseph appeared doubtful. He glanced anxiously at the tired girl by an ass. She passed no remark. She laughed.

As though she found something quietly amusing in the sorry state of affairs, the girl stepped away from the ass and began to walk gracefully towards the stable. That settled it. Joseph followed her meekly, trailed by the inn-keeper, apologetic and shaking his head sadly. His wife bustled into the inn in search of something to make the stable comfortable for a weary two, and little Mary became a slim flame of energy.

She was here, there, everywhere. She was a streak of quicksilver. She was a small, bright light flashing radiance about her and lighting the dim stable with the warmth of her friendliness.

She staggered out with old straw. She swept until they all sneezed and laughed. She staggered in with straw, clean and sweet smelling. Then she did something without quite understanding why she did it. She surprised them all, except the girl and perhaps her mother.

Little Mary cleaned the manger in the stable. She cleaned it out thoroughly and made it snug and cosy with fresh straw. She raced to the inn and returned with a birthday present—a small, warm, gaily colored quilt. She spread it on the straw, patted it with a last loving pat, and stood back, proud and delighted, to admire her own work.

She stole a quick glance at the girl. She had accepted all the things little Mary had done for her with understanding and enjoyment, and now she smiled again at her. The child's heart jumped with gladness, and her cup of happiness was filled when Joseph patted her head and murmured, "You are the one. Indeed, you are the one."

Little Mary beamed. Her blue eyes brighter than the bright blue pebbles in Uncle Paul's toy lamb, she skipped out of the stable, singing, "You are the one, you are the one." "You are the one," she sang as she danced down the country road. She splashed through the brook and, as the spray rose up before her in myriad silver jewels, she carolled, "You are the one, you are the one."

The air was drowsy and hummed with the music of the pollen-gathering bees, as she gathered gay anemones, gorgeous lilies, colorful wild thistles, and wild geraniums. Her heart was as close to heavenly bliss as she could imagine heavenly bliss as she ran back to the inn.

She peeped into the clear water of the pool in the courtyard, then shattered the reflection by lowering in a stone jar to be filled. She crammed into the jar the flowers. She skipped to the stable, and in a moment it rioted with the glory of the fields and was filled with fragrant perfume.

Her mother, bending over the tired girl lying at the dark side of the stable, sent her a swift glance of approval, then gestured to the entrance. Out went Mary obediently, wondering what meant all the bustle as she passed by inn-maids with clean cloths and bowls of water.

In the very centre of the courtyard were the inn-keeper and Joseph, waving their arms, solemnly whispering and shaking their heads. Their heads were so close their beards seemed to be one. You are the one, thought Mary and giggled.

Wouldn't it be funny if their beards got all tangled and they couldn't part them. Perhaps if that did happen, she reflected as she hurried into the inn for her meal, she'd have to cut them apart with a knife. What fun! She was still giggling when she sat down, and the stoutest of all stout maids told her to behave herself, even if it was her birthday.

Besides, she warned, she must not go near the stable—well, not for a while—or a certain small person would be going to bed feeling pretty sorry for herself.

A certain small person did not go to bed feeling sorry for herself. She did not go to bed at her usual time. Mother had, as a special birthday treat, allowed her to sit up after sundown. She leaned her head on her arms on the windowsill and glanced over the village.

The last chirping and peeping of sleepy birds drifted up to her from the trees in the courtyard. The fallen leaves scurried before the rising evening breeze, and from a distant orchard came the breaths of ripening fruits. Mary sighed happily. Deep down in her heart she wondered if anyone had ever had such a lovely birthday.

One by one the stars dappled the deep blue sky with silver. Towards the east a great star began to glow, and the white diamonds adorning the velvet blue flickered before its magnificence. They faded, they flickered, they faded again, and only the great star burned steadily and calmly.

Mary watched it with increasing interest. It moved across the sky and stood right overhead. She craned her neck out of the window, innocent eyes wide open, unaware she was witnessing a miraculous phenomenon. She kept her eyes on the star so long she began to feel giddy and sleepy. You are the

one, she murmured drowsily. Perhaps Uncle Paul and his sheep are looking at this star.

Head pillowed on her arms, little Mary fell asleep.

"And there" were in the same country shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

"And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid."

"And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.'

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

"And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

"And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into Heaven, the shepherds said one to another, 'Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us' . . ."

Mary opened her eyes. She thought at first it was dawn because of the light of the great star, but she then realised she could not have long been asleep. There were sounds in the courtyard. She peeped down.

Why! There was Uncle Paul! There were all the shepherds! There was much talk. There was much waving of arms and wagging of beards. Everyone went into the stable.

Mary was tempted to run down and follow them, but while she hesitated they came back to the courtyard. Again there was much waving of arms, wagging of beards, and conversation. Then they all hurried away and the inn was left silent and dark, the courtyard empty and still with the light of a great star, and dim light shining from a stable.

Mary looked over the drowsy village, then up to the great star. She looked so long she felt quite giddy again. Lovely star, she thought, you are the one. You are the one. She laughed. She did not know what it meant, but it was fun to say it. She patted away a yawn, looked down at the courtyard, and almost fell out of the window.

Still and wide open were her eyes. These men—where had they come from? How silently they had come. And the color! Such color! Never had she seen such color, only in the rainbow.

Their turbans were as white as the snow on the hills in winter, and in each turban gleamed a great white stone, as bright as the great star above. They wore gold on their necks and gold in their ears.

Their magnificent robes were all the colors of the gorgeous flowers of the fields: reds, scarlets, greens, indigo, turquoise, and ultramarine blues, primrose-yellow, and glowing orange. Their robes glistened with jewels and shimmered with cloth of gold. They were a riot of color: all the colors Mary loved and adored.

Out from the inn hurried her father. There was a great discussion. Everyone pointed to the star, then to the stable. Her father went into the inn, and the superb strangers walked softly, regally yet humbly, to the stable, and there was a deep silence save for the sweet tinkling of silver and golden bells on the camels.

The beauty, the color, and the mystery had gone to Mary's head. About her room she scampered, dressing herself in birthday finery. On her slender arms went her simple arm-bands. In her ears, just under where the soft ringlets clustered, went her crystal ear-drops. On went the brocaded red, white, and blue robe. Over golden curls swept ornamented,

BY STUART MARSHALL

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ILLUSTRATED
BY MILLS

silken scarf. Up were snatched Uncle Paul's lamb and the precious box of pebbles.

Swift as a bird she flew to the pool in the courtyard, to be mirrored in its clear waters. I look brave and grand, she thought. I am the one. Past the tall, white camels she crept a little fearfully. Over the luminous light bathing the courtyard light feet twinkled and tiptoed to the stable. Little Mary stole in.

Strange shadows played over the dark timbers in the dancing light of twelve clearly burning lamps. The scintillating jewels in gorgeous robes caught the lights of the lamps, and answering flashes of rainbow color danced about the manger. Color! Little Mary trembled with joy.

The men turned and spoke to Joseph and his wife, and again the magical jewels made magic in a stable.

The men knelt, and from wonderful ivory and silver and gold inlaid and carved boxes were taken gifts for a child. Immediately sweet scents wafted through the stable; the aromas of the beginning of life, the warm perfumes of spring, the essences of the fields, and the wholesomeness of nature.

For a moment little Mary stood stunned by the magnificence, and then she crept past the great men and peeped into the manger. A

baby! A lovely baby! Little Mary's vocabulary of beauty was limited to three words, and now she repeated them softly over and over again: pretty, lovely, grand!

Oh! So grand! She crept a little past the manger and came close to Joseph's wife. She might have touched her, but did not dare. Little Mary basked in the warmth of her nearness.

"Please," whispered little Mary, "me, too." She put gently by the side of a child in swaddling clothes a tiny lamb with blue pebbly eyes, and a carved box of pebbles. Suddenly her eyes blurred. She did not know why, but she could no longer see a baby in a manger.

She gave a little sniff. Her sweet, quaint trouble breathed through the stable: "Please, if you don't mind, what is the baby's name?"

"We have named him . . . Jesus," replied Joseph.

"Jesus. Pretty." She noticed Joseph staring at the little box he had made for her. She hesitated and broke into hurried explanation. "Please, it's been my birthday all day today, and Jesus is having a birthday, too, isn't he?"

She waited nervously, but he did not answer her.

While the inn-keeper talked to his friend Joseph, Little Mary glanced shyly at the tall, slim woman standing wearily at the side of the ass.

"Please, I think it's nice to have things given to you on your birthday, don't you? But I think it's nicer to give someone else something on your birthday, too. I haven't much to give to Jesus, but I thought he'd like the little lamb Uncle Paul made me, and—"

She glanced timidly at the silent Joseph—and thank you so much for making the pretty box for me. It's my most precious box, and I went to the brook and put pretty pebbles in it. And—and when you shake the box it makes music. So I thought I'd give it to Jesus so that when he shakes it, it'll make pretty music for him, too. So I just—I just gave it to him—and I—I— Little Mary trailed off, feeling miserable because nobody said anything.

Her anxious eyes looked up at three men, so tall, so grand, and she felt very tiny down there by their feet. Then the loveliest thing happened to little Mary. One of the tall men came right down to her. He took her

in his arms and swept her up to the top of his turban, and the great white stone in his turban dazzled her eyes. He kissed her. His great beard tickled her flushed cheeks.

He passed her to the second great man, and he and the great white stone in his turban dazzled her eyes. He kissed her.

He passed her to the third great man, and the great white stone in his turban dazzled her eyes. He kissed her. He slowly put her down. His wise eyes smiled at her.

"It seems," he commented, "that we have with us another philosopher. A very small one. A very wise one. A very pretty one."

The second great man nodded and smiled at her. "Yes. You are the one."

The third great man nodded and smiled at her. "Yes. You are the one."

Little Mary swallowed, sniffed, and blinked.

The first great man took from his robe a huge white stone and put it in her hand. The second great man took from his robe a huge blue stone and put it in her hand. The third great man took from his robe a great red stone, and, because he could not put it in her trembling hands, he fastened it to her grand

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Target for Matrimony



HE looked at the girl behind the desk. It was an expensive, leather-topped piece of furniture, dwarfing the girl behind it. She was a small, young creature with short, black hair, eyes the color of an acre of violets, and she seemed vastly amused by Johnny Blake. On his part, he thought she was as fresh as the morning's milk.

She put her chin in her hands. "A real, live logger," she said. "Imagine. Where are your caulked boots?"

"Look, small fry," Johnny said. "I had an appointment with Howard Jameson, ten o'clock."

"He isn't here."

"I know that."

"He's on the first tee, if I know him. It's the Oregon Coast golf tournament. He'll be standing around telling people how he won a forty-two-hole match in 1947."

"Great!" Johnny said. "Well, Miss—"

"McCrea, Sally McCrea. Mr. Jameson said I was to drive you out there when you showed up, but we don't have to do what he says. You could take me to lunch or—"

"I came down here to buy a hundred thousand dollars' worth of timber," Johnny said, "and I have no time to take fresh young ladies to lunch."

Her eyes widened. "Yipes! And all this time I thought you were looking for a job."

"Sure you don't mind driving me out there? I flew in and—"

"I don't mind," she said. "My dad is the professional out there."

Johnny joggled his memory for names tucked in between the baseball and football scores. "You mean like Hogan—like Snead?"

"Not exactly," she said; "but that was the idea at one time. That's how I got this job with Jameson Timber Company. Mr. Jameson told father he didn't want to watch me grow up to be a golfing fiend; so he put me to work. I used to hang around the pro shop all the time. Mr. Jameson said that my language was getting terrible, that I was getting muscles in my arms and skin like an old goat from playing golf all the time. He said that I was very unladylike."

"I see what he meant, I think," Johnny said. "Well, shall we—"

"I'm coming. I'm just explaining how I

"This your coat?" Johnny said. He picked a coat off the rack and held it out.

She put on the coat. "I'm trying to be more ladylike and glamorous, but it's hard going. Some dames get that helpless expression, climb into an off-the-shoulder dress, look at a man with a wide-eyed stare, tell him how wonderful he is, and before he knows what's happened he's walking up and down a hospital corridor waiting for his first child. I don't know how they do it. I try that languid, baby-faced routine and the men ask if I have indigestion."

"Miss McCrea," Johnny said, "if I were you, I would let the men do the pursuing. I would retain some dignity and try to be completely feminine at all times. An air of mys-

"I wonder," asked Johnny truculently, "if I could pry Sally away long enough for a dance?"

back by ropes. There was a table at which a young man was seated. He was talking into a microphone attached to a public-address system.

Johnny looked curiously over the heads of the people. "On the tee," the young man said, "Bill Titus, of Riverside."

A young man stepped up, waggled his club, swung, and the ball took off down the slope.

People murmured appreciatively, but Johnny was unimpressed. He looked around him. "See Howard Jameson anywhere?"

Sally pointed. "On that bench."

Johnny spotted him, worked his way through the crowd, and as the young man at the microphone said, "Tom Johnson, of Oswego, on the tee," slapped Howard Jameson on the back and yelled, "Hi, Howard, you old scoundrel, I drive a hundred and fifty miles, fly two hundred, and then find you out here watching some characters—"

There was a stunned silence and people made shushing sounds. The man on the tee stepped back and glared at Johnny. Howard Jameson looked at him as if he had just come over the hill with a lantern, selling apples.

The man on the tee stepped up again and swung. The ball took off, described a wide arc to the right, and ended up on the ninth fairway. People turned around and stared

By STEVE McNEIL

got this job, in case you ask me something about timber. I don't know beans about timber." She sighed. "All I really want to do is get married, but all the men I meet only want me to show them how I get all that distance off the tee when I only weigh eight stone."

Johnny winced. "Don't look at me."

"I'm not proposing; just explaining. I won the Oregon Coast when I was only sixteen. I was going around some with the assistant pro until I showed him why he was fading his two iron shots. After I cured his fade, he faded."

tery also helps. Or so my sister said when she trapped my brother-in-law."

"Be feminine, be mysterious, be dignified, eh?"

"Right."

"I'll keep your advice in mind."

They went outside and got into a small coupe. They headed south, and twenty minutes later she turned down a side road and a boy motioned them into a parking spot. They walked up the driveway towards the clubhouse.

Beyond the clubhouse was a large canopy, and many people were standing around, held

He gave her a lot of good advice on how to catch a husband, but he never dreamt he was the one she was after.

at Johnny as if he had just kicked his grandmother.

"What's the matter with everyone?" Johnny asked.

"You are supposed to be quiet," Howard said, "while golfers are hitting the ball."

"Why?" Johnny said. "I don't see why just because—"

The young man at the microphone said, "Championship flight, women's division, Gloria Reynolds on the tee."

A young lady stepped up. She was wearing a white skirt which flared here and there and a pale blue sweater. Her hair was the color of freshly cut hemlock, and she had a short, straight nose and long, straight legs. Johnny had the sensation of having been hit on the head by a large, blunt instrument.

"Yeow!" he said.

"Quiet," Howard Jameson said.

The girl teed up her ball, took a fluid, graceful swing, and the ball took off like a bird.

"Beautiful!" Howard Jameson said.

"You said it," Johnny agreed.

"Do you want to follow her around?" Howard asked.

"Why, certainly, if she doesn't mind people following her around."

"She won't mind," Sally said. "She loves it."

"Let's go," Johnny said.

They walked down the fairway, Johnny and Howard flanking Sally. "She isn't so hot," Sally mumbled. "I beat her six and five last year."

Johnny was not listening. He was busy watching Gloria as she walked up the fairway with her caddie.

"Year before last I walloped her," Sally said. "Seven and six."

Johnny leaned across Sally. "She engaged or anything?"

Howard shook his head.

"She can't hit an iron shot for sour apples," Sally murmured, "and she chokes up on short putts."

"Sometimes I wish I were a golfer instead of a logger," Johnny said. "It just came to me."

"If she finds out you're a logger intending to buy a hundred thousand dollars' worth of timber," Sally said gloomily, "she'll hang around like a necktie."

Johnny looked around him at the beautiful green fairways and the even greener, billiard-like surfaces of the greens. He began to take a somewhat brighter view of the game of golf. All work and no play and a guy could get ulcers.

In his mind's eye he began to see himself walking the fairways with Gloria Reynolds, hand in hand, arm in arm. The thought almost broke him up, and then he came back to reality.

"Say, Howard," he said, "how long would it take me to learn this game?"

"Oh, brother!" Sally said. She turned and walked towards the clubhouse.

"What's the matter with her?" Johnny asked.

"Must have been something you swallowed," Howard mumbled.

"She's a fresh young doll," Johnny said. "Now, about this golf—"

Howard sighed. "Listen, Johnny; Gloria Reynolds has made more would-be golfers of young men around here than the pro could have done in ten years. They take a look at her, run down to the pro shop, spend two hundred dollars for clubs, bag, cart, balls, another six months taking lessons. And then she beats the socks off them and loves interest. Take my advice—forget it. Take Sally McCrea to dinner or something."

"Oh, no!"

"Take up fishing, take up sailing. Golf is a disease with no cure, and that Reynolds girl is worse."

"Listen, I'm over twenty-one. I don't have to be told what to do. What do you think I am—a child?"

"In the hands of that dame, you're a babe in arms," Howard waved his arms. "I remember when you were logging with a broken-down tractor and a truck held together with chewing gum, and dames were just creatures who packed lunches for your crew. What's come over you?"

"What do you think I am?" Johnny yelled, "a mechanical man? Just because I want to

meet a girl, it doesn't mean I've gone off my rocker."

"No, but it's a start," Howard said. "I thought you just came down to buy some timber."

"Well, can't a man take a few days off? What do you want me to be—the richest man in the graveyard or something?"

"O.K., but don't say I didn't warn you."

Two hours later, when Johnny stood before her, he had all the symptoms of seasickness. From a distance, she was merely gorgeous. Face to face, she was a sensation.

"This is Johnny Blake, Gloria," Howard said.

"How do you do, Mr. Blake?"

"Johnny came down to buy a hundred thousand dollars' worth of timber from me."

She turned her eyes on him, taking in his solid length. An impartial observer might have said that she had dollar signs in her eyes, but Johnny was not an impartial observer. "It is nice to meet you, Mr. Blake."

"I saw you play, Miss Reynolds," Johnny said. "You were wonderful."

"But I three-putted eleven."

"You did?"

"And I shanked an iron on fifteen."

"I think I was behind a tree. I didn't notice."

She smiled at him. "Are you playing in the tournament?"

"Uh—no," Johnny admitted.

"You mean you don't play golf?"

"Well—certainly I play. But I haven't played for years, I thought I'd—well, sharpen up my game while I'm down here. Take the kinks out."

Howard Jameson stared at him.

She put her hand on his arm. "Do that. And after the tournament is over maybe we can get in a round or two together."

"Uh—Miss Reynolds," Johnny said, "don't think I'm rushing things, but are you doing anything for dinner tonight?"

"I'm so sorry, but I'm having dinner with Jerry Hennessey. He was medallist, you know."

"Lunch?"

"Mr. Blake, I could die, but I'm having lunch with Artie Anderson. He was State amateur champion last year." She smiled at him. "But keep trying."

"Tomorrow night—dinner?"

"I'm supposed to have dinner with the club champion, but I'll get out of it." She wagged her fingers. "I have to dash. Semi-finals tomorrow. I'll see you, won't I?"

"You bet," Johnny said. After she was gone, he looked at Howard. "What the heck is a medallist?"

"Low qualifying score," Howard said. "Now do you admit that you're licked? Medallist—State amateur champ—club champion."

"I have a dinner date, haven't I?"

Howard nodded. "But don't tell her the bank is putting up the hundred thousand. She thinks you're carrying it around in your hot little hand."

"Where do I get some golf clubs?" Johnny said. "And never mind the advice."

"In the pro shop," Howard said. "Downstairs, turn to the left. As if my advice would do any good."

Johnny went into the pro shop and looked around. A little weather-beaten man with blue eyes, wrinkled at the corners from squinting into the sun, said, "Yes, sir?"

"I would like to buy some golf-sticks," Johnny said, "and—he waved a hand around the shop—"whatever else I'll need."

The little man squinted at him. "Beginner?"

"That's right."

"You wouldn't be the logger fellow Sally was telling me about, would you?"

Johnny nodded.

The little professional held out his hand. "I'm Harold McCrea."

Johnny took his hand. "Johnny Blake."

Harold McCrea tapped his finger on the counter. "Sure you want to learn the game?"

"Certainly."

"Met the girl, eh?"

"Yes, but—"

"All right—all right. I'm in the business of selling equipment, and if a man wants to buy, that's his business. However, I can't give any lessons during the tournament—too busy."

"Lessons," Johnny said. "A man needs lessons to—"

"Certainly, boy."

Johnny stuck out his chin. "If a girl weighing not much more than a sack of cement can play the game, so can I. And I don't need lessons to do it."

Mr. McCrea looked at Johnny sadly. Half an hour later Johnny had clubs, bag, cart, shoes, and a sack of practice balls. "The practice tee is right through there, and the best of luck to you, and you'll need luck."

Johnny put on the shoes, walked out to the practice tee, took a ball out of the bag, and placed it on the tee. He took the driver out of the bag and looked it over. He gripped the club, planted his feet, gritted his teeth, and swung. There was a crisp smack, the ball took off like a startled swallow and sailed far and true.

"Ha!" Johnny said. "Lessons!"

He teed up another ball, braced himself, and swung. There was no sound. Johnny looked down at his feet. The ball still rested on the tee. He frowned, braced, and swung again. The ball dribbled off the tee and stopped.

He looked the club over suspiciously, put down another ball, and swung. The ball took off at an angle, hit a tree, bounced on to the eighteenth green, on which there was a four-some.

One of the men picked up the ball and tossed it over to Johnny. His face became red, and he found that he was perspiring. He swung at another ball, which careered off to the left, went over a fence, and into a ploughed field.

"Why, this is ridiculous!" he yelled.

"It's worse than that," someone said behind him. He turned around. Sally McCrea was standing behind him.

"Listen," he said, "the first ball I hit went

thataway." He pointed with the club. "It went a country mile. Since then—"

"You swing like a rusty gate. This isn't a ball park."

"What's the difference? It's a ball, isn't it, and—"

"Yes, and that's a club, and the way you're doing it, never the twain shall meet. Someone has to show you how."

"Nuts!" he said.

She took the driver from Johnny, teed up a ball, planted her feet, wagged, swung. There was a crisp smack, the ball took off smartly, bent slightly to the left, and disappeared over a rise.

"Do that again," Johnny said.

She did it ten times, and then said, "Give up?" She handed the club to Johnny. "I started when I was seven. It has taken me seventeen years, but you haven't that much time. Why don't you forget the dame? She isn't worth it."

"If a little squirt like you," Johnny raged, "can hit that thing—" He stopped. "All right. Your father won't give any lessons during the tournament. I don't suppose you'd care to?"

"No," she said. "I don't suppose I would have a job. Furthermore—" She stuck out her lower lip, said "Oh!", and walked away.

Johnny peered at her, scratched his head, waved in his caddy, and followed her. He caught her at the entrance to the clubhouse. "Look, Miss McCrea," he said, "if you'll just give me a quick treatment so—"

"So you can bluff that Reynolds dame into thinking you're a golfer?"

"Well, I—"

"Dozens of men have tried it. They see her, run to the pro shop, get blisters, ulcers, sore feet, and empty pocketbooks. Later on, they give their clubs away and the next

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"You swing like a rusty gate," said Sally after watching Johnny's hopeless efforts to hit the ball.

Perilous Sanctuary

*On that Christmas Eve the knight returned from the Crusades to find
in his own homeland the victory he had sought so far away.*

RIDING through the December woods, he knew that he had failed. He knew that all the swords of Christendom had failed.

This Christmas Eve the sunset through the bare branches was as red as the embers of war—nearly a hundred years of war in lands beyond the seas. Hugh of the Fens was riding home from the Third Crusade.

Harsh-faced and weary, he rode in his chain mail, because in this year of 1193 the forests and dim roads of Norman England were haunted with robbery and murder. And, anyway, he had nothing else left to wear.

The long white surcoat over his mail, and girdled by his broad sword belt, was torn and travel-stained. The scarlet linen cross sewn on his back was the mark of the returning Crusader.

When they had ridden out across Europe, a mighty host with spears like slanting rain, they had worn the great cross on their breasts. Hugh of the Fens had ridden out to the Holy Lands a hard man of pride with twenty men-at-arms behind him; and now he rode home alone. Even the cross on his back was faded, faded by fierce suns and by the weathers of the long roads.

The slow-walking hoofs of his horse made only soft sounds on the wet, dead leaves, and Hugh was tired and all the high, brave faith nearly gone.

He had seen the black banners of the sultanate and the green banners of Islam whipping in the sun as the deep-shouting cavalry of the Saracens, riding at full gallop, spread out into the terrible enveloping crescent formation of their fanatical charges. To crash in holy combat against the slower, heavier iron gallop of the crusaders—swift desert horses against the massive Norman war horses.

But in this winter sunset Hugh was thinking mostly about the high-vaulted stone hall of his small manor house. It was always dark and smelled of wood smoke, and now it was stripped of all silver and ornamental gear to pay for his crusading. He wondered how his lonely life was going to begin again on his lands which stretched across the marshes.

Even his lands were pledged, too, to pay the expenses of the men-at-arms who as free men had taken the cross. Eleven of them were dead now, and the rest had scattered, months ago, to find their various wandering ways home. He was too poor to help them any more.

He had heard along the roads that his king, the burly, horse-booming Richard the Lion Heart, was in captivity. News travelled so slowly. He had heard only that Richard, on his own way home, had been taken by his enemies along the Danube and was in a dungeon somewhere in middle Europe, held for England to ransom. Further than that, Hugh had not heard.

And all the swords of Christendom, having failed, were spidered over with the webs of princely politics. And the faith that once had shone in the steel was dulled and nearly lost.

As the sunset ebbed through the woods, he came to a ruined chapel. Dried weed stalks stood thick in its yard; its gray stone front was overgrown by a tangle of wild brambles. Its door stood partly open, sagging. Much of the roof had been torn away by a falling tree in some winter's gale.

Hugh reined his horse to a stop. He had not passed another sign of human habitation for more than two hours. A wind was rising, and night was coming on. For a moment he sat motionless, looking at this ghostly wayside ruin. It was a place to sleep, this Christmas Eve.

Stiffly he swung down to the ground, but instead of unsaddling for the night he led his horse well off the road, out of sight among the trees, and tied him to the low-hanging bough of an ancient oak. Then he took his shield from the saddle bow and went back towards the chapel to have a battiewise look around before he settled down for supper and sleep in a strange place.

There were hands of evil and brutal men along the roads of England these days, because the strong hands of barons and knights, like himself, had taken their swords to the crusade. His main worry tonight was for his horse. A tremendous war horse would be a prize indeed for the lawless riders; and to be set adrift by thievery would be a desperate trouble for him. In the forest silence, his golden spurs rang faintly as he walked up the grassy flagstone path. He pushed the heavy door wide open, and stood listening.

The silence flowed back. There was not a sound. Slowly he walked the length of the dusty stone floor. Holding his helmet in the crook of his left arm, he stood before the abandoned altar.

And as slowly as he had walked, he bowed his head. He said nothing aloud. Only, in simplicity of heart—of his feudal world and its simple faith which made the kingdom of heaven but an extension of this earth, and very near—as a strong man standing in the presence of the Grand Seigneur, he thought:

Sir God, I rode out from home to find something. I do not know what, though once I thought I did. Whatever it was, it was not to be found in the pride of battle, nor in all the pageantry of our princes; though these things are very great, and contented me for a while. I have travelled far—nay, farther than ever I thought I would—now I am nearing home again, and my quest is over. And I have not found what I sought, even now, not even in poverty and loneliness.

His thoughts trailed off, in weariness, in emptiness. There was nothing left to say, even in his heart.

A gust of wind, coming down through the broken roof, stirred the hem of his long surcoat about his ankles. And then he heard a human sound—a sharp breath, shaken as if drawn sobbingly to cry out. It was instantly stopped. He could tell that it was done by a hand clamped firmly over a mouth.

In four quick strides he was around the altar. A woman was hiding there. She was crouched in fierce protectiveness over a child.

As his fingers released the handle of his sword, so that the partly drawn blade thumped softly back into its heavy scabbard, the woman stood up, tall and defiant, to face him. "I thought we would be safe here," she said bitterly.

"You are safe," Hugh said.

They stood gazing questioningly at each other in the last of the dim light. Hugh saw that she was hardly more than a girl. She was poor, a daughter of the land, but she was beautiful with its strength. The child lying on the mother's folded cloak on the floor looked wonderingly up at them both.

"Why are you hiding?" Hugh asked gently.

"Our farmstead was burned down and looted this morning. Our cattle and the two plough horses were driven off. They are looking for me, now."

Instinctively, Hugh turned to stare at the undefended open door. It must have given her a glimpse of the faded cross on the back of his surcoat, because when he looked at her again some of the fear had left her grey eyes. At least, she did not seem to be afraid of him, much, any more.

"Robbers?" he asked.

"Yes," she said, "but more than that. Other families have been pillaged in this countryside. Always some lonely farmstead, like ours. But these robbers today were doing their work for a man I know. It is a—a quarrel."

"How did you escape, to get here?"

"I saw them coming in time, and I ran for the forest with the baby. I hid him in a thicket. Then I went to the edge of the forest and saw our house and sheds all a-smoke and our animals being driven off. The man I spoke of was sitting on his horse watching. Then I took the baby and came through the woods to this place. We have been here since mid-afternoon."

"But your husband—"

"He went to the crusade, but not like you," she said tonelessly. "Two years ago, when our lord the earl sent a message home for more men, my husband was one of those who were made to go. Our child was born long after he left. He is not yet come back and I am glad, for today he would have been killed."

"Tell me about the quarrel and the man who sat on his horse," Hugh used the commanding voice of a baron, to overcome her reluctance and to piece together the sorry fragments of her tragedy.

"He is Morgan of Shadsford, but under their breaths the people call him the Red Boar. He is a knight and a landowner, and he did not take the cross when the crusaders rode away. Perhaps he thought there was more profit to be had at home. The dispute is over land."

She stopped, as if considering how much she could tell this tall stranger. The last of the daylight was almost gone now, but something in his scarred fighter's face must have reassured her, because suddenly she said, very low: "Also he covets me."

Just once she twisted her fingers together in a quick, small gesture. "Times past I have had—unpleasantness that I dared not tell my husband, for it would have cost his life. He is brave. But only a farmer. Now that he has fought the Saracen across the world, I do not know. He may be skilled in arms. Still, no match for a knight in mail. I have prayed that he would never know my real danger. The open dispute has been over land."

Knowing men and the feudal system, Hugh understood what would have happened. This countryside tyrant of Shadsford—wherever that was—this fellow called the Red Boar could have taken the woman to some stronghold of his and kept her there, saying later that he had rescued her from robbers and given her protection. She was only a humble woman of no consequence; her word could not stand against the word of a man of title.

"Where can you go now to be safe?" Hugh asked.

"We have no near kin left," she said. "We have nowhere to go."

"Then tomorrow," he said, "I will take you with me towards my county—three or four days' travel from here. There I will give you a cottage where you may live in peace until your husband returns. We will leave messages for him with folks all along the way. He will be searching for you, and so he will be told where you are. And, meanwhile, if the others follow, let them."

He did not ask the odds.

And she did not thank him, except with her eyes. He could barely see them now, it was so dark.

"I want us to be on the road with the first of daybreak," he said abruptly. "It will be a strange Christmas for the baby."

"Yes, I had near forgotten since morning," she said dully. "This is Christmas Eve."

She stopped and poked up the child. Awkwardly, Hugh poked out a big tentative finger. He was surprised when a damp little hand closed around it.

He was accustomed to the hard, unspoken trust of men; but this was different. It gave him one of the oddest feelings of his life. For a moment it turned his whole sword arm weak with gentleness, with fear of frightening the child.

"Now, now," he growled with a bachelor's gruffness. Bending down his head, half ashamed of this weakness, he touched the child's hand with his lips, and slipped his finger away.

Walking out through the front door of the chapel, he went back into the woods, unsaddled his horse, and following a slope of ground led him down until he heard the silver talk of running water among its stones. It was a brook, and he waited, leaning tiredly against a tree, while the horse drank.

Then he led him back and tied him in concealment again, but this time with only a halter and a long enough rope of braided leather so that he could graze on the dead grasses of winter.

Lashed to the high back of his saddle was a homespun blanket and a wallet with barley cakes and cold meat in it. These he took, and went back to the brook to fill his drinking horn with water. With his hands full he headed for the chapel again.

"A blanket for the child," he said harshly. "And food for us."

They dared not light a fire, so they ate in the cold and the night. The child was sleeping in its mother's lap. He could see them only vaguely in the deeper darkness behind the deserted altar; but watching them broodingly he was reminded little by little of something else. Of this same night long centuries ago.

This lost chapel, though not so kindly as a stable, was the only shelter they had. With weather coming on, the child could not sleep hidden in the woods. He had thought of leaving his horse saddled, and tied near the door in case of visitors, but actually that would only make their situation more dangerous.

Their one best hope was to be overlooked for the night in this lonely place; and a big war horse tethered anywhere within quick reach of the chapel would be seen by any passers-by.

Not so kindly as the stable of long ago. As he stood grimly watchful above the child, Hugh found his thoughts taking strange shapes. Only half-seen yet, they were crystallising into a pattern.

In the magnificence and uproar of war he realised he had not tried to see too clearly, and had forgotten something so beautiful and so simple as to be the greatest thing on earth. It was as if looking for a supreme light, a miracle, the mailed armies had ridden unseeing over humble footprints in the dust.

Troubled, Hugh tried to sort out the things he knew, the things he had fought for. Nearly a hundred years ago, in 1096, the flame-idea of the crusades had swept Europe and had started the first of the mighty waves of dream and flesh and iron across half the known world.

In 1099 they took Jerusalem with a slaughter of infidels so nearly complete that the

To page 40

Hugh held the child and looked down at that new little face, as new and eternal as life would always be.

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"L'Aigrette," in
which she has a
leading dance role.

Paris in love with tiny Australian girl

By
ROLAND PULLEN,
of our Paris staff

Since the days of Dame Nellie Melba, Paris has never fallen so much in love with an Australian as it has with tiny 23-year-old ballet dancer Kathleen Gorham.

KATHIE made her first appearance in Paris with the Marquis de Cuevas' Monte Carlo Ballet Company a few weeks ago.

The day after the premiere she was photographed on the front page of seven Paris newspapers. One called her "the most charming ballet dancer we have ever seen." Later, another said, "Where has she been hiding?"

Kathie, whose name didn't even appear on the billboards of the De Cuevas Company on the opening night, is now the star of two new ballets with the same company.

One is "L'Aigrette," a ballet based on a story of Princess Martha Bibesco, with music by Prince George Chavchavadze; the other is "Fou Rouge, Feu Vert," based on a story of Bertrand Castelli.

For these two ballets Kathie is being coached by Madame Nijinska, sister of Nijinski, the greatest male ballet dancer of all time.

Most bewildered person is all the fuss over her dancing is Kathie herself.

When I took her to lunch she said: "I came to Paris hoping for a minor role and find I have been given so much to do that I have hardly time to eat. It's very exciting. But I wish my parents—they live at Longueville on the Lane Cove River in Sydney—could have been here."

Taking Kathie to lunch sets a problem, especially if she has a rehearsal in the afternoon, as is nearly always the case at present.

She eats only bread and butter and drinks two cups of coffee. I was rather worried about this. But she smiled and said: "Please don't worry. Usually I have only time to munch a piece of chocolate."

She became nostalgic at the mention of chocolate, for she thinks Australian chocolate is the best. This led her to talk of her teachers in Australia. First there is Miss Isabel Anderson, of Bankstown, N.S.W., with whom she had her first lessons when she was 10.

Then there are Sydney teachers Lorraine Lorton and Leon Kellaway. Said Kathie: "They gave me a real love for the ballet."

When she was 15½ Kathie joined the Borovansky Ballet, and she stayed with it for three years, visiting all Australian capitals and New Zealand.

After Borovansky's training, Kathie won a scholarship to Sadler's Wells in London. Two weeks after her first appearance in the ballet corps, Elaine Fifeild, another Australian in the company, fell ill, and Kathie took her place as the Swan Queen.

This was Kathie's first big role in Europe, and since then she has never looked back.



PAUL GRINWIS, leading male dancer of the Borovansky Company, to whom Kathie Gorham is engaged, photographed in Melbourne working on the music for a ballet with Kathie's picture beside him for inspiration.

I can now reveal for the first time the romance in Kathie's life.

On her return to Australia she met Paul Grinwis, a Dutch ballet dancer who is now 32 and who was then dancing in the Borovansky company. They fell in love, but they were separated when Kathie returned to Europe. They wrote to each other. When they met again in Belgium recently they decided to become engaged.

They are to be married shortly. "Paul is a dear, and we shall be very happy," said Kathie.

However, they are separated by half the world once more. Paul is the leading male dancer in the Borovansky Ballet Company which will tour Australia in the New Year. The company opens in Melbourne on January 30.

Paris newspapers call Kathie "the tiniest ballet dancer in the world." She doesn't know whether this is exact, but she is certainly very tiny. She weighs only 6st. 7lb. When you see her perfect features you realise one reason why Paris has fallen in love with her. She has very long eyelashes, sparkling brown eyes, jet black hair tied in a bun, and the most ravishing smile.

In her opening night performance she danced a small ballet on her own called "Ange Gris" set to Debussy's "Clair de Lune."

In the notices of the critics next day the established stars such as Tallchief and Rosella Hightower, who danced the bigger ballets, were relegated to minor places. Kathie was singled out for first honors.

ELIZABETH VISITS A QUEEN



THE DUKE (above) bends down to talk to a *Fijian* schoolgirl in a native buri. Right: The Queen unlocks the gate of the Central Medical School, which she officially opened in Fiji. With her is the principal.



QUEEN SALOTE seated at the doorway of her palace in Tonga, which she vacated for Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh during their visit to her kingdom.

Royal Tongan family vacate palace for Her Majesty and Duke

Two thousand guests sat down to the feast which climaxed Tonga's reception for the Queen.

The feast, with music and dancing, took place in the tree-shaded park beside the Royal Palace of Queen Salote of Tonga.

AT the top table with the Royal couple was Queen Salote with her family, Crown Prince Tungi and his wife, Princess Mata'aho, and Queen Salote's younger son, Prince Tu'ipelchake and his wife, Princess Melanaite.

They looked down on the thousands of guests who ate with their fingers from the piles of food, dipping into finger-bowls and using beaten bark table napkins.

The food was a week in preparation.

It included hundreds of chickens, long lines of roasted sucking pigs stretched out for hundreds of yards, turtles, and fish both raw and baked in leaves over charcoal, lobsters dressed with seasoned coconut milk, root vegetables, freshly boiled crabs, pineapples, bananas, papaws, and Tongan sweet dishes.

Queen Elizabeth's two-day visit to Tonga was intimate and purely Tongan because

outsiders were not allowed to crowd out the islanders.

Intense celebrations without any crowd control are possible here because local custom demands an orderly seating of welcome and all the traditional ceremonies are courteous, as becomes these people.

The islanders went to enormous trouble decorating their streets with huge shells and scenes of Tongan life, and erecting a bamboo shelter thick with flowers and fruit where their native queen received Elizabeth II.

With typical Polynesian hospitality Queen Salote and her family left Nuku'alofa Palace so that Queen Elizabeth and the Duke could live there. For the duration of the Royal visit they stayed at a seaside bungalow.

Queen Salote had the apartments in the palace completely refurnished.

The dining-room was done in rich gold brocade against a green background and the breakfast-room in a light pale green with touches of gilt.

The two-story palace,

which is built of lime-washed coral, has five bedrooms upstairs. These were refurnished with flower-patterned linen and cottons in cool shades.

Part of the quiet Sunday that followed the day of feasting and dancing was spent at Queen Salote's estate at Kauvai, 15 miles from the palace.

After breakfast at the palace Queen Elizabeth and the Duke attended a combined service in the Wesleyan Church, returning to the palace to change for a picnic lunch at Kauvai.

Before-luncheon swimming at a secluded beach was part of the programme, and the luncheon was as simple as the previous day's feast was sumptuous.

The picnic ended early because Queen Elizabeth had to return to Nuku'alofa in order to farewell Queen Salote and embark in mid-afternoon on the Royal barge for Gothic and New Zealand.

Fijian welcome

LUTU NEMANI, a sergeant in the Water Police Force, is the proudest man in Fiji.

"I de only man salutie de Queenie," he boasted on the day the Queen arrived in Suva, his dark, handsome face beaming with pleasure.

Lutu, 6ft 6in., broad and fuzzy-haired, was dressed in a white sulu skirt with a serrated hemline, a blue shirt, and red sash.

The Queen's arrival was wonderfully spectacular.

As the Gothic anchored 16 outrigger canoes skirmished round the starboard side, skimming the rippling blue water.

Their golden sails glinted in the sunshine and their crews were in green, yellow, and white coconut-leaf skirts with vivid hues in their leis of flowers.

Three chiefs, resplendent in pale gold tapa dress and

By
ANNE MATHESON,
our Royal tour correspondent in Tonga



ROYAL FAMILY OF TONGA, from left: Prince Tu'ipelchake, his wife, Princess Melanaite, and Crown Prince Tupouto'a-Tungi with his wife, Princess Halaeralu Mata'aho. They are wearing full ceremonial dress.

bright bead necklaces, boarded the launch with the Governor of Fiji, Sir Ronald Garvey, to cross the harbor and board Gothic.

When the Queen came ashore by Royal barge and landed at the wharf she was presented with a bouquet of flowers by Mei Ganilau, a four-year-old Fijian girl in a tapa dress with lace frills.

The Queen was entranced with little Mei.

The child walked slowly and unsteadily forward and the Queen bent low over her to receive the flowers and thank her.

"Isn't she sweet?" the Queen said to Sir Ronald Garvey. And she watched little Mei until the child was out of sight.

For use as the centrepiece of the bouquet a very rare red-white-and-blue flower that blossoms only once a year was flown 120 miles from the shores of a lake on the island of Taveuni.

The Queen looked up shyly at massive Sir Lala Sukuna, who led her along the tapa carpet into Albert Park, where 30,000 Fijians had assembled.

Her face quickly lit with

a wide smile when she saw the snouts of roasted pigs—part of the Fijian food gift—sticking out from a cover of leaves.

She listened attentively to the ceremonial spokesman as one ceremony followed another in Albert Park, but did not speak till the ceremony of kava drinking began with the enormous kava root being dragged across the ground.

Then the Queen turned and made a remark to the Governor.

She turned to the Duke as the mixing ceremony started and asked him a question which the Duke answered after consulting his programme.

The Queen hesitated for a moment before, drinking the kava, but she bent forward readily, dipped down into the cup, and swallowed in one gulp all but the dregs.

These Fijian ceremonials are deeply significant and the Queen's sustained and solemn interest was perfectly attuned to them.

"She is beautiful. She is lovely. She is a very gracious Queen," Lady Maria Vasowale (Sir Lala Sukuna's wife) said to me after she had led the highborn ladies of Fiji in their own ceremony of welcome.

Dripping in coconut oil, Lady Maria added, "She has the love of all my ladies."

The Queen settled down to a long entertainment of dancing. She tapped her hands to the graceful hand movements as they gave actions to their song which had been composed in her honor.

As the dance continued the Queen relaxed, bent forward, and clapped her applause.

Towards midday the first of many casualties were carried out of the park.

Children fainted, and at one stage the grass seemed strewn with little brown bodies. Fijian Red Cross workers revived some by fanning with palm leaves and ambulance workers made their way through the dancers to carry others into the shade.



THE QUEEN, with the Duke, stops to talk to the head boy of the Queen Victoria School for Boys, Fiji. The Queen's dress is sleekless yellow shantung with wide bands of tucks in the skirt.

Sara Quads go down to the sea



ABOVE: On the beach at Hungry Head, Alison bounces on her rubber dolphin while Judith pulls its tail. Mark solicitously gives the fish a nice long drink of seawater.

LEFT: Mrs. Sara has a busy time preparing the eager Quads (from left), Alison, Phillip, Judith, and Mark, for a swim. Their swimsuits were Christmas gifts from Jantzen.

RIGHT: Mark, with his bucket of water, looks after Phillip's gay sea-horse. The Quads' beach toys were given to them by London Baby Carriage Co., Melbourne.



● A special holiday treat for the three-year-old Sara Quads was a visit to Hungry Head Beach, ten miles from Bellingen, on the north coast of New South Wales. As the pictures on these pages show, the children thoroughly enjoyed themselves.



READY, SET, GO! The Quads (above) are off, running helter-skelter into the water for their first "surf." Phillip (left), Judith, and Mark take the lead, while Alison, heavily laden with toys, brings up the rear. Pictures by staff photographer Ron Berg.

UNDER MOTHER'S WATCHFUL EYE (below), Phillip (left), Alison, Mark, and Judith play boisterous games in the water. The day was hot and the children needed no encouragement to get wet. They were greatly excited by the waves which splashed them.



STAR TENNIS PAIR CLOSE PALS

Hoad, Rosewall as off-court comedians

By MARY COLES, staff reporter

Australia's red-hot hopes for Davis Cup laurels, Lewis Hoad and Ken Rosewall, whose partnership on the courts began when they were 15, can talk as a team almost as well as they play tennis.

CONVERSING as a "team," their wisecracks are as neatly synchronised as the strokes which have established them as a world-famous doubles pair.

At a brief breakfast-time session during the recent Victorian Championships, quiet, fair-haired Hoad introduced Rosewall as "Muscles" . . .

"Because he really hasn't got any . . ." he said.

Small, dark, wiry, dead-on-the-beam Rosewall said amiably that Hoad was jealous of him. "All his girl-friends fall for me. He won't even let me meet his latest. Of course, I know she's a dracksack . . ."

"That's my auntie," said Hoad.

In answer to a question about the kind of girl they thought attractive, Rosewall pushed his breakfast tray aside, took up a magazine picture of film star Jean Simmons, and gave it a hearty kiss.

"I just like them all," said Hoad, making short work of a second poached egg, bacon, and buttered toast.

"Australian girls the most . . ." they agreed, putting gagging aside. "They're really terrific. The nicest in the world."

They also agreed that they didn't like sophisticated women.

"Or the kind who push themselves forward at parties," added Rosewall.

With schoolboy charm Rosewall put on his thinking-

cap and decided that 21 would be the ideal age for marriage. But later he reasoned that he really didn't know, but supposed it would be whenever he met the right girl.

At 19 Hoad and Rosewall have won the Australian, French, Italian, and Wimbledon doubles championships, and are the pin-up boys of hosts of pretty girls, but neither takes the adulation he receives seriously.

They admit that they did get a great kick when they were playing a big game at the Los Angeles Tennis Club in the U.S. and film star Debbie Reynolds shouted, "Come on, boys . . . you're for me."

Meeting glamorous film stars also gave them a tremendous thrill, for both boys are film fans. Hoad's preference is for Westerns. Rosewall likes all pictures and follows the movie gossip in the latest magazines.

The association between Rosewall and Hoad is close, and both on and off the court they are perfect foils for each other.

Hoad is relaxed and casual, with a flair for making a good job of whatever he is doing.

Light limbed, quick thinking, and possessing excellent powers of concentration, Rosewall is a fast mover. He confounds opponents with beautifully anticipated backhand shots, while Hoad shatters their morale with cannonball services.

Ken, who is the elder by three weeks, and Lew began



TENNIS STARS Ken Rosewall (left) and Lewis Hoad exchange banter over breakfast during the recent Victorian championships, in which Hoad beat Rosewall in the final.

their careers as rivals when they played N.S.W. schoolboy tennis at the age of nine.

They joined forces as a doubles pair four years ago, and, when Frank Sedgman and Ken MacGregor withdrew from amateur tennis after the 1952 Davis Cup matches, Rosewall and Hoad stepped into their places.

The highlight of their tennis partnership came this year at Wimbledon when the Duchess of Kent presented them with the coveted Wimbledon Doubles trophy.

The boys say it was the biggest moment of their lives.

Neither Ken nor Lew suffers from big tennis temperament. They believe that all players

are self-conscious at the beginning of an important match, and that the best way to overcome it is to get interested in the game itself as quickly as possible.

When they're not playing tennis they are practising for it, and even after a heavy day's play they do limbering-up exercises each evening for about 20 minutes to keep fit.

Ken, the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Rosewall, of Penhurst, N.S.W., almost grew up on a tennis court. His parents have always been keen district players, and a racquet was among his first toys. His father coached him until about two years ago. Now he looks to tennis sage

Harry Hopman for advice about his game.

Lew's mother, Mrs. Allan Hoad, of Glebe, N.S.W., gave Lew a racquet when he was a tiny tot so that he would amuse himself hitting a ball about in their backyard instead of playing in the street.

He tried to copy the technique of players at the Herford Tennis Club, whom he watched over the back fence of his home.

Later Adrian Quist became his guide, philosopher, and friend.

Rosewall's and Hoad's parents will be in Melbourne for

the Davis Cup, but when it is all over and the shouting dies, both mothers will be thinking of the piles of washing their sons will be bringing home.

Ken's touring kit includes six sports shirts, six pairs of tennis shorts, twelve tennis shirts, and a dozen pairs of socks.

Lew's laundry will be about the same except for the socks.

He carries three dozen pairs. He wears two pairs at a time for play, one thick and the other thin, "to make things easier for my feet."

Ken and Lew each have a white nylon shirt which they launder themselves overnight, and when they were in America for the U.S. National Championships they bought nylon suits.

The material looks conventional enough, but is as light as down and shakes out without a crease after packing.

The boys insisted that they were never distracted by the lace trimmings and gay bits of nonsense worn by many women tennis players abroad.

Ken admitted he might find it hard to concentrate, though, if Marilyn Monroe partnered him wearing a sweater!

"He couldn't play in mixed doubles; anyway," said Hoad. "He gets nowhere in a game without me."

Ken Rosewall laughed loudly at this.

"We're having to move to a quieter room on the side of the hotel," Hoad explained, gathering up an armful of togs. "Muscles" thinks this one is too noisy.

"He says he can't sleep properly here. The traffic wakes him up every morning — at 9.30 a.m!"

I left them, thinking that when they retire from tennis they could still have a joint career — on the stage as deadpan gag men.

Eating her way to singing success

By HELEN FRIZELL, staff reporter

"Forget about your schoolgirl figure!" was the advice given to 21-year-old lyric soprano Enid Blight, of Leeton, N.S.W., by famous singer Joan Hammond, who has awarded Enid a scholarship for study overseas.



SOPRANO Enid Blight, of Leeton, N.S.W., who will study singing overseas.

ENID, a quiet, blue-eyed, brown-haired girl, weighs less than eight stone and is only five feet two inches in height.

"Miss Hammond told me I must develop weight, particularly round the diaphragm," said Enid. "So I'm eating a cooked breakfast every morning, drinking milk before bed, and doing half an hour's breathing exercise a day, as well as practising singing. I also intend to have plenty of sleep and not so many late nights in future."

Now a student at the Conservatorium of Music, Sydney, Enid will sail for England at the end of next year with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. Blight, and her 14-year-old brother Graham.

"My parents will pay my fares and Miss Hammond will pay for my tuition in London. I am not sure yet where I will be studying," said Enid.

Enid has always loved singing and music. When she is at home on her parents' rice farm she practises diligently. She has given concerts in Leeton.

When the news that Enid had won the scholarship was announced, her family was delighted, particularly her grandmother, Mrs. R. Briggs.

"My grandmother was the singer of the family," said Enid. "She had a lovely dramatic soprano voice when she was young, and was chosen to study overseas just as I have been. But things were different in her day. Girls just didn't go off on their own to

Europe. So she stayed at home."

Enid left her own home eight years ago to become a boarder at the Presbyterian Ladies' College, Pymble, N.S.W., the school Joan Hammond herself attended.

During Enid's fourth year there, Joan Hammond returned from England to give recitals in Australia, including one at her old school.

The headmistress, Miss Dorothy Knox, introduced Enid, then a schoolgirl in tartan tunic, to Miss Hammond.

In Miss Knox's flat the nervous Enid took a deep breath and sang "The Singer," by Michael Head. Miss Hammond told the schoolgirl to keep in touch with her.

After she left school, Enid took up singing seriously and won five scholarships in five years at Sydney's Conservatorium.

When Joan Hammond came back to Australia this year, Mr. and Mrs. Blight reminded their daughter of Miss Hammond's instruction to "keep in touch." So Enid wrote a

letter and was told that Miss Hammond would hear her sing.

For this audition Enid Blight chose three songs: "Love's Sanctuary" by Robert Franz, "Ah! Lo So" ("Ah, I Know") from Mozart's opera "The Marriage of Figaro," and "Depuis le jour" from the opera "Louise" by Charpentier.

Some time later Miss Hammond announced that the scholarship would be awarded to Enid Blight, adding that the girl's voice would be at its peak by the time she was 28.

"Seven years' time," said Enid, who is filling in the year before she sails for England with intensive study at the Con. and hard practice at her Bondi flat.

She is also learning French, and spends more than an hour a day memorising words and music of songs for her repertoire.

And, dutifully, she is eating fattening food and keeping up those deep-breathing exercises.

To defend the Davis Cup

America will meet Australia, the holder of the coveted Davis Cup, in the 42nd Davis Cup Challenge Round at Kooyong, Melbourne, on December 28, 29, and 30.

THIS will be the second time the Davis Cup has been played in Melbourne, the last being in 1946 when Australia lost to America by five sets to love.

Since 1946 £42,000 has been spent on Kooyong courts, and there is now permanent accommodation for 10,000 spectators.

The American team, which is challenging Australia, is Vic Seixas, Tony Trabert, Ham Richardson, and Bob Perry.

Australian stars in the Davis Cup squad include Ken Rosewall (19), Lewis Hoad (19), Mervyn Rose (23), and Rex Hartwig (24).

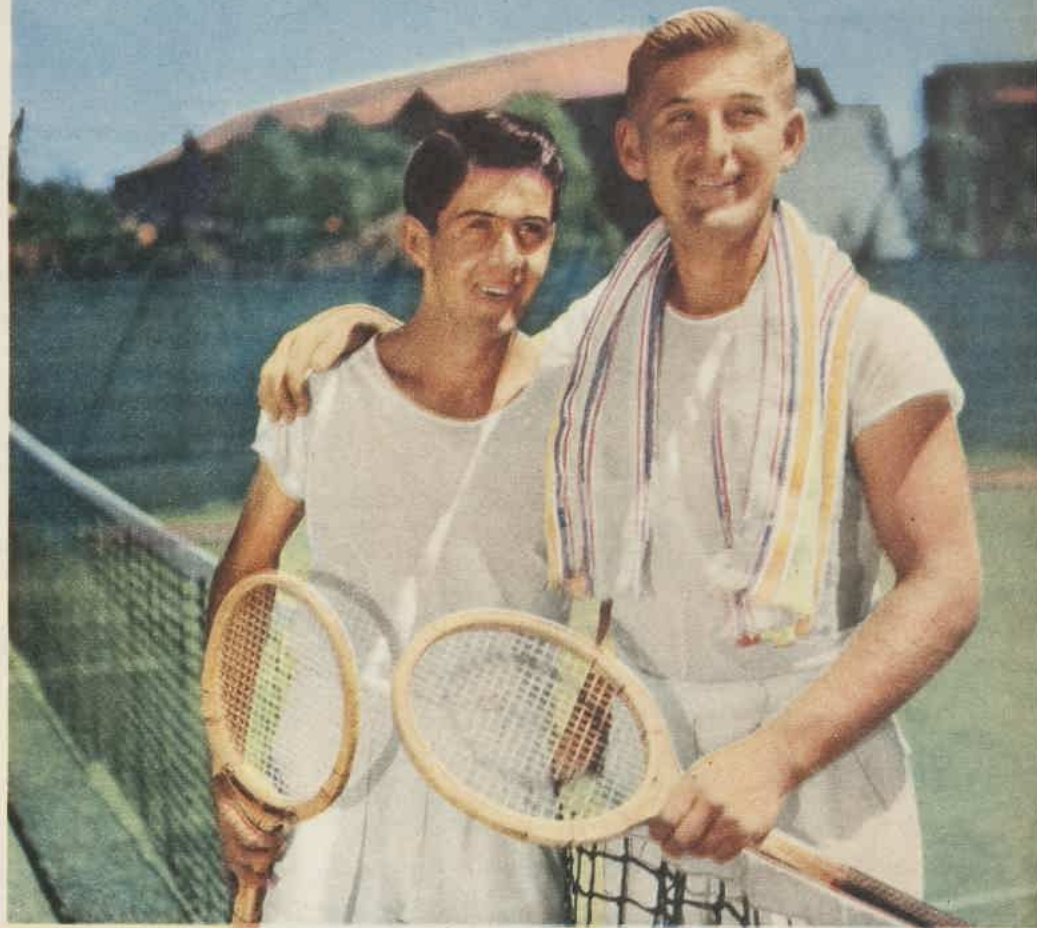
Non-playing captains Australian Harry Hopman and American Bill Talbot both say that their players are in tip-top condition and are confident that they will win.

Vic Seixas and Tony Trabert played in the Davis Cup last year in Adelaide against Australia's Frank Sedgman and Ken McGregor, who successfully defended the Cup.

Australia has held the Davis Cup since 1950. Although 40 nations have competed for it since 1900, when it was first presented by American tennis player Dwight Davis, only four countries have won it.

America has held it 16 times, Australia 10, British Isles nine, and France six.

At first Australia and New Zealand entered a combined team, but since 1923 have challenged separately. Of the 10 challenge round matches Australia has played she has won seven.



CHAMPION TWINS of tennis, Ken Rosewall (left) and Lewis Hoad, have just turned 19. With the exception of the American title, they hold the major world amateur doubles titles. Rosewall is the Australian and French National Singles champion, and Hoad is Australian Hard-court champion. Experts think these two are Australia's main hopes for the Davis Cup.



MERVYN ROSE has a fine service and excels at the net. He is an outstanding doubles player, but is often unreliable in singles. With Vic Seixas he won the U.S. National Doubles title last year, but did not play in the Davis Cup.



STROKE-MAKING is the feature of Rex Hartwig's game. Rex won the American National Doubles title with Mervyn Rose this year.



ECSTATIC (left) is the word for Alfred as he tries out his scooter. Above: Purchases are concluded in a Brisbane shop. Mrs. Joe Statile turns to baby Jennifer, held by Mr. Statile, who also holds his contribution to Alfred's present—a jar of sweets—while Fred, Joe, Lorna, and Carmela Statile wait for supervisor Lance Upward and saleswomen Mrs. Caine and Mrs. Pritch to complete the business details.

A leper colony's Christmas carol

Children's savings sent Santa to native boy

By SARA STRAMBERG, staff reporter

In far Noumea, capital of New Caledonia, a little leper boy will be happier this Christmas because a family of Australian children have thought of him almost constantly for nearly six months and saved up to buy him a Christmas present.



WIDE-EYED, Alfred (left) expresses his thanks in the chapel with a prayer for the donors of his Christmas presents.

THE Australian family are the five children of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Statile, of Virginia, Brisbane.

In our issue of May 20, Kay Melaun wrote of her visit to the Ducos sanatorium for lepers, near Noumea.

Mrs. Statile read the story to the children and the part that interested them most was Kay Melaun's meeting with the smallest and youngest patient, Alfred, an orphan, who "leaned shyly into the protection of the encircling arm" of Mother Blanche, head of the nuns who take care of "les malades" at the sanatorium.

"Has he got a mummy and a daddy?" asked seven-year-old Carmela, eldest of Mr. and Mrs. Statile's family.

"No, no mummy or daddy," said Mrs. Statile.

Silence for a moment. Then Carmela said, "Wouldn't it be lovely if we could give him something or do something for him? Will Santa know to go to him?"

"She meant, of course, that I should send him something from the family," Mrs. Statile told me.

"I explained that with five children to dress, I couldn't manage to send anything to Alfred just then."

But the twins, Joe and Lorna, aged five, and Freddie, aged three, joined forces with

Carmela in pleading for something to be done for little Alfred.

As for baby Jennifer, aged 14 months, she could be relied upon to aid and abet the others in any undertaking!

"Daddy Joe" (the children's father) and their mother talked things over one night, and decided it might be a good idea to let the children learn for themselves the joy of giving.

"In the beginning, I read the children the story of Alfred and the other little sick ones as a lesson in being thankful because we are all healthy and have each other," Mrs. Statile said.

"I feel children learn by being shown a contrast to their own happy lives."

It was decided that the children, through their own efforts and by saving up, should buy a Christmas present and send it to little Alfred.

Thereafter "little Ala-fred," as three-year-old Freddie called him, became a very real person in the Statile household.

"We generally take two loaves of bread a day from the baker, and I get a half-penny change. Freddie was always on hand to take the half-penny. 'Don't forget little Ala-fred,' he would say," said Mrs. Statile.

"When I took an extra loaf there was sixpence half-penny

change. I tried to keep the sixpence, but the children were adamant.

"Little Alfred got it. I haven't had any change from the baker for months. I never have any change."

The greengrocer, too, was induced to take an interest.

"It's not profitable for you to come here," Mrs. Statile remarked to him several times.

"He ante-ed up with a penny or twopence each time he came," she said.

On the day I called he had made his final contribution of sixpence before the family set off to buy Alfred's present.

The children's pocket-money on Saturday mornings had gone into their savings bank money-boxes, each box neatly labelled with the name of the owner.

Every penny that went into those money-boxes for six months was for little Alfred.

Even baby Jennifer had to contribute her share.

"Although asking favors of relatives and friends is strictly forbidden, we told the children they might ask this once, because they were asking on Alfred's behalf, not their own," said their mother.

"On Sunday, after Sunday school, was their time for collecting from grandpa, 'Daddy Joe,' Great-Aunt Grace, and me, though they collected unofficially from me at all sorts of odd times."

Then the copy of The Australian Women's Weekly with the story of the little leper boy was mislaid. There was a hue and cry from the children. Without the address in the "Weekly" they could not send their gift.

"Have you found little Ala-fred yet?" they asked constantly, till in desperation Mrs. Statile wrote to The Australian Women's Weekly for Alfred's address.

That was when we heard first of the children's effort.

With the reply the Statile family received a snapshot of little Alfred himself.

The children prize that snapshot.

"Today, Freddie asked 'When's Ala-fred's mother coming?'" Mrs. Statile told me when the photographer and I called to see the children.

I had visions of her readying a guest room for Alfred's dark-skinned mother. Then I remembered that Alfred was an orphan. I looked inquiringly at her.

She laughed. "He meant you," she gurgled.

"I told them you were coming today, and Freddie calls you Ala-fred's mother!"

I looked at the little family

packed into Great-Aunt Grace's 27-year-old car, with Aunt Grace at the wheel, ready for their reconnaissance trip to look for Alfred's present.

They really were a happy, united family, with their mother looking a young, excited girl herself instead of the mother of five children.

In "kitty" to buy the present was the £4/10/- the children had saved.

"Daddy Joe" commented in the Brisbane shop: "Alfred must have a bottle of sweets in his parcel!" So he bought them.

(Incidentally, we suspect that in order to buy a scooter, a musical top, planes spinning round a control tower, a ship, and other toys, Mr. and Mrs. Statile surreptitiously swelled the kitty.)

Lorna Statile added: "Alfred has become almost one of us, so often is his name heard in this house. The children always mention him in their nightly prayers."

ALFRED'S presents arrived in good time for Christmas.

Fred Dunn, an Australian photographer who has been living and working in Noumea for nearly 20 years and who took the Ducos photographs shown on this page, wrote to us of the arrival of the gifts:

"Alfred had not been told of the two big parcels at the post office for him addressed 'Alfred, care of Mere Blanche, Ducos, New Caledonia,' which Mother Blanche and Sister Anne Marie picked up during one of their usual shopping trips to town," Mr. Dunn said.

"By some strange telepathy Alfred was the very one who came running up to the nuns' little car when they drove into the native section of the sanatorium."

"Alfred does not yet understand French over well, but it wasn't hard to make him understand that there was

something for him in the big parcels.

"Surrounded by his friends he was given the parcels, but in his eagerness and excitement was unable to open them."

"Mother Blanche took over, and soon the toys came tumbling out."

"Spinning-tops, motor buses, ships, all brought wondering shouts, but what really brought a concerted yell was the control-tower with the two planes revolving around it, their propellers spinning in the breeze."

"Sister Anne Marie was the mechanic for the toys, and she, too, seemed fascinated by the spinning planes."

"The final production of the scooter overflowed Alfred's cup of joy. In his emotion he could only croon."

"All the toys, including the scooter, had to be tried out, of course. It was touching to watch the eager faces all straining for a good look at each one."

"To close the little fete, Alfred handed out sweets from a jar that had been included in one of the parcels."

"At Mother Blanche's suggestion the group of boys and girls trooped into the chapel and knelt while she prayed aloud, mentioning and thanking each childish donor of the splendid presents."

"She confided to me her happiness. She had tears in her eyes, saying that not only would Alfred be made happy by the gifts, but also all his friends, because in their generosity these children share everything."

"Alfred personally thanked me in his few French words and asked that his thanks be transmitted to each child who had signed the Christmas card which came with the presents."

"Sister Anne Marie is to prepare a little letter soon, which will contain Alfred's and his friends' gratitude for kindness extended to them."

Ill wind that blew somebody good

Young couple built new life on W. A. oilfield after cyclone

On the shore of Exmouth Gulf in North Western Australia, I met a young family who deserve their own chapter in the history of the discovery of oil in this country.

THEY are Laurie Wann, ex-Air Force sergeant, later professional fisherman, and now a water borer doing contract work for West Australian Petroleum Pty. Ltd., his pretty 27-year-old wife, Elaine, and their two small boys.

In the little temporary home on the edge of the long, empty beach that runs away to the left 20-odd miles to Northwest Cape, I met Elaine Wann, and heard her story.

It is a story that begins when Laurie Wann was stationed at Learmonth in wartime and fancied the idea of coming back there some day, a story that reached a dramatic point last March, when a cyclone swept through Exmouth Gulf, destroying the small fish cannery at Exmouth, where Laurie was working as a professional fisherman.

"In a way the cyclone was the best thing that ever happened to us," said Elaine.

It was a remark that naturally reminded me of the saying about an ill wind, but there is far more than good luck or bad luck to the Wanns' story.

Met during war

BEFORE Elaine was married she worked as a doctor's receptionist at Mt. Lawley, and later in the Government Statistician's office. She met Laurie during the war, and they were married eight years ago. Three years ago they came to Exmouth, where Hunt's cannery company operated a small fish cannery, one of several the company owns in Western Australia.

Hunt's had decided to try tuna fishing and had set up the cannery in Nissen huts, dating from wartime. Elaine was the first woman to come to the small community, where the factory employed about 12 men. Laurie worked as a fisherman.

At first the Wanns camped in a wartime hut, where Laurie was able to show Elaine his name still written on the door.

The Wanns did well. Later three other wives came to Exmouth to live.

Early this year, Laurie and Elaine, thinking of Gary, now aged four, and Lloyd, three, had paid a deposit on a house in Perth and were considering going south to live.

It was the cyclone season. Around that part of Western Australia the winds blow

ceaselessly over the spinifex and the sparse scrub of the low hills. In the summer come the cyclones. The residents date events from the last "big blow."

On March 22 this year came the big blow which destroyed not only the cannery and living quarters but the Wapet base camp at Learmonth. (Wapet is short for West Australian Petroleum, and pronounced as Woppit.)

Elaine lent me an account she had written of that night. It is most vivid, with its picture of the scene as the radio forecast of gale force winds came through. During summer only a skeleton staff remained at the cannery—three

it too late. We'll never make it now."

All the time they feared that the wind might change, for it was blowing toward the Gulf. Should it alter direction, the sea might sweep in and obliterate them.

At the cannery they ran to the ice-box near the freezer. The ice-box, 8ft. by 8ft., was strongly built. Huddled in it were the foreman and his wife and four children. There they stayed while the cannery fell in around them, listening to the roar of the sea and the sound of flying timber and galvanised iron. By morning the wind abated and they saw the damage.

The four asbestos-and-iron cottages and the three aluminium Nissen huts had been flattened. Water surrounded them. The Wanns' kerosene refrigerator had been moved five yards.

A heavy wardrobe-dressing-table was 10 yards away. Some time later one of Elaine's tablecloths was found three miles up the beach.

They all set about salvaging their belongings, and later two young men waded waist deep from the nearby oil camp to see what had happened and to report that the camp, too, had been destroyed.

The cannery company did not rebuild. Tuna had not been plentiful, and the cyclone decided them to move out of the area.

It was then that the Wanns made the decision that they now feel was a fortunate one. Laurie made up his mind to remain in the district where the oil search provided opportunities.

He and his partner, Eddie Daw, hired an old water boring plant from a sheep station and took on the job of well-boring. Soon after, they got the job to bore a new well for the oil camp.



Dorothy Drann

fishermen, including Laurie and the foreman, whose wife and four children lived there.

Men, women, and children lashed down what they could. As the screaming wind rose and the rain poured through the lifting roof, the Wanns stumbled the 50 yards to the cannery, each carrying a child.

"By now the wind was nearly at its peak of 120 miles per hour," wrote Elaine. "My elder son was thrown on his face, and I recall with horror the screams of terror from the children as they cried, 'Mummy, Daddy!' My husband grabbed both the children and we ran on. I remember thinking, 'We've left



MRS. L. WANN with her two sons, Gary (left) aged four, and Lloyd, in front of their temporary home at Exmouth Gulf, W.A. Creeper round the door has purple flowers and grows in the sand above high-water mark on the beach.

A few days before I met them they had taken delivery of a new water boring plant and truck.

And the day I met Elaine she, like most people in the district, was watching the share market, because earlier with her own savings she had bought 100 oil shares.

"People in the south say to me it must be lonely," said Elaine. "But, of course, it's just the opposite of lonely. The base camp is only a few miles away and we have more visitors than I might have in a city suburb. The only thing I miss is women's company. There are so few around and we do not get much opportunity to see each other."

Elaine's nearest women

neighbors on one side are the wives of two lightkeepers at Northwest Cape, 20 miles away. A few miles away in the other direction is Exmouth Gulf Station homestead, home of Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Lefroy, on whose two hundred thousand acres sheep property oil was found.

Elaine makes all her clothes and the children's. She keeps the books for her husband and his partner. When he went to station properties to bore for water she and the children went and camped with him. The day I visited her she was packing up for their annual holiday in Perth.

Another "big blow" had been forecast by Inigo Jones for December, but in any

case Elaine was stowing her belongings in trunks for safety from cyclones in their absence.

We walked along the beach to see the site of the cannery, now marked only by a cement floor and the shell of the providential ice-box.

On the way Elaine saw a snake track across the sand and called the children to her and looked round in nearby clumps of grass. "I have to watch them, of course," she said. "But the life is healthy for them. They hardly ever have any sickness."

Earlier I had used the word pioneer and she had said, "Oh, you couldn't call us pioneers. We don't miss much here."

Modern pioneers

BUT the Wanns are the 1953 version of pioneers. They travel by motor, not by bullock waggon. They get their mail by air and they hear their news by radio. But they have the same tenacity, courage, and farightedness that characterised their forefathers who settled the outback.

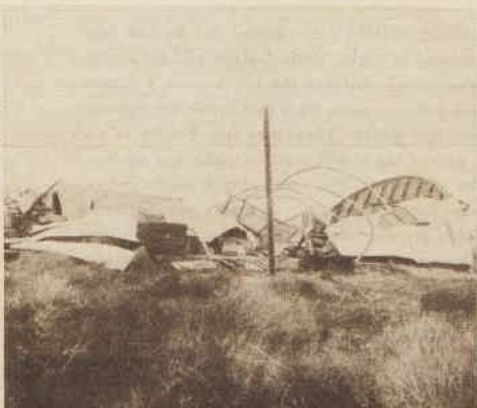
It is all a matter of degree. To a woman living in a city suburb Elaine's life would seem an isolated one, far from shops and picture-shows.

Elaine has plenty of compensations for such things. "We are building for the future," she had remarked earlier as she talked of their plans.

And they are the kind of young people who are not only building their own future—they are helping build Australia's.



ON THE BEACH at Exmouth Gulf, the Wann family with Eddie Daw (left), who is Laurie Wann's partner. In the background is an old army barge, relic of wartime.



AFTER CYCLONE last March this was all that was left of the small fish cannery which had been established in Nissen huts. The wind reached 120 miles per hour.

FIGURE PROBLEMS.

THE SHORT, PLUMP WOMAN is warned, in the small, rather wicked sketch at left, what not to wear. The "don'ts" include a belled-out skirtline, excessive shoulder width, a broad belt, a harsh color, a too-large print, and a wide-brimmed hat. The neat-as-a-pin dress, tailored or semi-tailored, is the best fashion for the short, plump woman. A very short skirtline, even when in high fashion, is not for her figure; mid-calf is the most becoming length. The two dresses at far left, perfect designs for the short and plump, are styled with easy skirts and feature narrow pleats. The bodice tops have deep V-shaped necklines.



THE TALL, LARGE WOMAN is catered for by the two fashions illustrated at right. Both designs will help give an illusion of slenderness. Solving the big woman's figure problem is not easy because most lines that make her appear shorter also make her wider. Therefore her height is an advantage and if played up it will tend to make her appear less heavy than she actually is. The small sketch above shows how cluttered detail emphasises a big woman's proportions. Simple tailored lines are the best for the large, heavy figure — the simpler they are, the more becoming. The short black dinner dress and neat red-print day dress at right are both designed with slenderising lines. Note long, narrow V necklines, which should be finished only with a narrow collar, and elegant panel arrangements in the skirts. Both are perfect camouflage for the large figure types.



Solved by *Rene*

THE SLENDER GIRL with a small bust has a comparatively easy figure defect to camouflage if she always chooses a design with a soft bulky bodice. A narrow silhouette is the flat-chested woman's worst enemy. Note the slim-line black dress in the little sketch at right and see how straight-up-and-down it makes the wearer appear. The yellow chiffon at right, with its frilly neckline and full skirt, will give the figure with a too-small bustline a graceful silhouette. Width needed for a woman with a narrow chest can be achieved by a wide halter neckline and a wide stiffened bow. See short dinner dress at far right.



THE TALL GIRL, long and straight as a string bean, invariably loves a slinky black stem of a dress (see sketch far left) that makes her look more like a broomstick than anything else. The girl with a tall, willowy figure should break the line of her dresses as much as possible and give herself width with big sleeves and crosswise details. A full skirt and a skirt with tiers are perfect camouflage for excessive height plus slenderness. Pretty colors are among her best flatterers, and so are all the season's flowery prints. She should not try to disguise her height by stooping or hunching the shoulders or by wearing flat-heeled shoes and dull, over-tailored clothes. The soft feminine flower-printed dress (left) is a superb design for her. Its rounded and feminine silhouette adds grace and fullness to the over-thin and over-tall figure types.

Incognito

[from page 7]

established. Life went on as steadily as the ship.

On the afternoon of the third day out, as I lay in my deck-chair reading, Barbara came running. "Little Bit is gone," she stammered, with trembling lower lip.

We went down to the cabin. The steward was on all fours, looking under the beds and furniture.

"Somebody must have left the door open," he said, "or it wasn't closed properly and swung open, and I suppose he got lonesome here all by himself and went looking for you. You should have taken him up to the movies with you, Miss."

"He's a smart dog," Barbara said. "Let's go everywhere he might go looking for us."

So we went to the dining-room, to the smoking-room, the theatre, the swimming pool, up the stairs, down the stairs, up on all the decks and around them, and to a secret little deck we had discovered between second and third class at the back of the ship, where Little Bit was taken for his exercise mornings and evenings, where he ran about freely while I stood guard. A liner is as big as a city. He was nowhere.

When we got back the steward said, "I know where he is. You see, anybody who finds a dog naturally takes it up to the kennel, and that's the end—he stays there for the rest of the trip. Well, remember, I never saw the dog; I don't know about him."

"The butcher—that's the man in charge of the kennels—he's liable to report me if he finds out I helped him. He's mean, especially about money. He figures that each passenger gives him ten bucks for taking care of a dog, and he doesn't want any of us to match it."

"There was a Yorkshire stowing away trip before last—he caught him on the gang-plank as the dog was leaving the ship. The passenger had put him on a leash. Well, the butcher stopped him from getting off."

"He held up everything for hours; the man had to pay passage for the dog, and the steward who had helped hide him was fired. Herman Haegeli is his name, and he's as mean as they come. You'll find him on the top deck, near the aft chimney, where it says Kennel."

At moments such as this one I enjoy the full confidence and affection of my child. Her nervous little hand is in mine; she willingly takes direction; she is all devotion, and no trouble is too much.

She loves me especially then, because she knows that I am larcenous at heart and willing to go to the greatest lengths to beat a game and especially a meanie.

"Now remember," I said, "if you want that dog back we have to be very careful. First, let's go and case the joint."

We climbed up into the scene of white-and-red smokestacks, the sounds of humming wires and the swish of water. In yellow and crimson fire, the ball of the sun had half sunk into the sea, precisely at the end of the avenue of foam that the ship had ploughed in the ocean. We were alone.

We walked up and down, like people taking exercise before dinner, and the sea changed to violet, and to indigo, and then to that glossy gun-metal hue that it wears on moonless nights. The ship

swished along to the even pulse of her machinery.

There was the sign. A yellow light shone from a porthole. I lifted Barbara, and inside, in the immensity of one of the upper cages, was Little Bit, behind bars.

There was no lock on his cage; there was no one inside the kennel. The door was fastened by a padlock. We walked back and forth for a while, and then a man came up the stairs, carrying a pail. He took the padlock off the door.

"That's our man," I said to Barbara.

Inside the kennel, he brought forth a large dish like the body of a kettle-drum. The dogs were barking.

"Now listen carefully, Barbara. I will go in and start a conversation with Mr. Haegeli. I will try to arrange it so that he turns his back on the cage in which Little Bit is, and you carefully open the door of the cage, grab Little Bit, put him under your coat, and then you don't run—you stand still, and after a while you say, 'Oh, please let's get out of here.'"

"I will then say good evening, and we both will leave very slowly. Remember to act calmly, watch the butcher, but don't expect a signal from me. Decide yourself when it is time to act. It may be when he is in the middle of work or while he is talking."

"Oh, please, Poppy. Let's get out of here," Barbara said, rehearsing.

I opened the door to the kennel and smiled, like a tourist in appreciation of a new discovery. "Oh, this is where the dogs are kept," I said. "Good evening."

Mr. Haegeli looked up and answered with a grunt. He was mixing dog food. "My, what nice food you're preparing for them!" I said. "How much do they charge to take a dog across?"

"Fifty dollars," said Mr. Haegeli, who had a Swiss accent. There are all kinds of Swiss, some with French, some with Italian, and some with German accents. They all talk in a singing fashion. Their faces are as varied as their accents.

The butcher didn't look like a butcher. A good butcher is fat and rosy. Mr. Haegeli was thin-tipped, thin-nosed; his chin was pointed, and in the light he didn't look as mean as I had expected. He looked rather fanatic and frustrated.

"How often do you feed them?"

"They eat twice a day, and as good as anybody on board," said Mr. Haegeli, "all except Rolf there. He belongs to an actor, Mr. Gruber. He crosses twice a year, and he brings the dog's food along."

He pointed to the cage where a large police dog was housed. "Rolf, he is fed once a day, out of cans. He seemed to resent Rolf and his master."

"You exercise them?"

"Yes, of course, all except Rolf. Mr. Gruber comes up in the morning and takes him around on the top deck, and he sits with him there on a bench. There is such a thing as making too much fuss over a dog."

I said that I agreed with him. He tried to keep him in his cabin; he said he'd pay full fare for Rolf, like a passenger. He'll come up any minute now to say good night to Rolf. Some people are crazy about dogs."

Mr. Haegeli was putting chopped meat, vegetables, and cereal into the large dish. "There are other people that try to get away with some-

thing; they try to smuggle dogs across, like that one there."

He pointed at Little Bit. "But we catch them." He sang it in his Swiss dialect. "Oh, yes, we catch them; they think they're smart, but they don't get away with it, not with me on board, they don't. I have ways of finding out; I track them down."

The fires of the fanatic burned in his eyes. "I catch them every time." He sounded as if he turned them over to the guillotine after he caught them. "Here comes Mr. Gruber," he said, and opened the door.

Kurt Gruber, the actor, said good evening and introduced himself. He spoke in German to Mr. Haegeli, and Mr. Haegeli turned his back on Little Bit's cage. As he opened Rolf's cage we were deafened with barking from a dozen cages.

The breathless moment had arrived. Barbara was approaching his cage door when the dog lover Gruber saw Little Bit and said, "There's a new one."

He spoke to Little Bit, and Little Bit, who had behaved as if he had been carefully rehearsed for his liberation, turned away with tears in his eyes. Gruber and his dog disappeared.

Here Haegeli had wiped his hand on his smock, and, with it still smoky with dog food, had shaken hands when we introduced ourselves. He was proceeding to mix the dog food, and the chances for rescuing Little Bit were getting slim.

"Where do you come from, Mr. Haegeli?"

"Schaffhausen; you know Schaffhausen?" Mr. Haegeli asked.

"Yes, yes," I said in German. "Wonderbar." "Ja, ja, beautiful city." "And the waterfall." "You know the Haegeli sausage factory there?"

"No, I'm sorry."

"Well, it's one of the biggest sausage factories in Switzerland: liverwurst, salami, frankfurters, boned hams—a big concern, belongs to a branch of my family. I'm a sort of wanderer, I like to travel—restless you know; I can't see myself in Schaffhausen." He looked up. He was mixing food with both hands, his arms rotating.

"I understand."

"Besides, we don't get along, my relatives and I. All they think about is money, small money. I think in large sums; I like a wide horizon. Schaffhausen is not for me."

"How long have you been travelling?"

"Oh, I'm now two years on this ship. You see, I'm not really a butcher; I'm an inventor."

"How interesting! What are you working on, Mr. Haegeli?"

At last Mr. Haegeli turned his back on the cage in which Little Bit waited. "Well, it's something tremendous. It's so to say—revolutionary."

"Oh?"

"There's a friend of mine, a Swiss, who is a baker, but, you know, like I am not a real baker. I mean, he knows his trade, but he has ambition to make something of himself, and together we have created something that we call a Frankroll." He waited for the effect.

"What is a Frankroll?"

"It's a frankfurter baked inside a roll. We've got everything here to experiment with the material, the ovens and

To page 28

All characters in the serials and short stories which appear in The Australian Women's Weekly are fictitious, and have no reference to any living person.

Marriage Contest closes on Dec. 31

Very little time is left in which to enter our Happy Marriage Contest. It closes on December 31. Entries with that date postmarked on the envelopes will be accepted, but no extension of time beyond that will be granted.

THESE are the four sections of the contest:

1. Best advice to married couples from anybody.
2. Best advice for husbands from a wife.
3. Best advice for wives from a husband.
4. Most charming wedding group picture.

These are the final progress awards:

SECTION 1. BEST ADVICE TO MARRIED COUPLES FROM ANYBODY

TO the newly married I would advise patience, tact, loving kindness, and a good understanding.

I have just celebrated with my husband our Golden Wedding. We were married young, on January 16, 1903, and I have always practised what I preached.

Patience is an outstanding factor, tact a must, kindness a necessity, and understanding a principle. When we were married an uncle of mine gave us this advice:

"Do your best to help each other and try to be bright and cheerful if things go wrong."

A wise wife soon learns her husband's likes and dislikes and tactfully caters for them.

Teach your children to respect and love and honor both parents. Thanks to the use of tact and patience, loving kindness and understanding we have reached a half-century of married bliss, and would live it over again if possible.

An outstanding factor is patience. An old adage is "A soft answer turneth away wrath."

Our four children are happily married.

£5 progress award to Mrs. B. M. Westman, 2 Golfer's Parade, Pymble, N.S.W.

SECTION 2. BEST ADVICE TO HUSBANDS FROM A WIFE

MY darling John,—

You have been away one week now, and the emptiness

of my days without you is becoming so great that I thought it would help pass the time until your return if I told you just why you are such a wonderful husband and why I love you.

Firstly, you are as thoughtful now as before we were married, still concerning yourself with my comfort and happiness. You tell me often that you love me and make me aware of my own attractiveness to you. (So that I try all the harder, darling, to remain pretty all the time.)

I love you because you discuss all our money problems with me, respecting my opinion about what we need and what we can save. Also you do not become annoyed when I buy a new hat or a crazy pair of ear-rings which I can well do without—making me try all the harder to save your pennies.

You are a wonderful father to our children. You listen to their news and chatter, share their games and sports, and help with their school-work.

I love the little ways you help me, bathing Billy at weekends, hanging-up your clothes, and not flooding the bathroom TOO much.

You have made me the happiest wife in the world, my darling, and our children secure and loved.

Yours lovingly,
MARY.

£5 progress award to Mrs. Shirley Abbott, 33 Constitution Rd., Dulwich Hill, N.S.W.

SECTION 3. BEST ADVICE TO WIVES FROM A HUSBAND

I CONSIDER these points essential for a woman to keep her man contented.

Tastes must be similar. Both gababooks, stay-at-homes, or in-between. But not one going in one direction and the other opposite.

I would like to say to wives, keep yourselves fresh

THE PRIZES

The prizemoney of £250) in our Happy Marriage Contest is made up as follows:

£1000 for the best entry in the contest.

£250 each for the best entry in the four sections. Total £1000.

£50 each for the second best entry in the sections. Total £200.

£25 each for the third best entry in the sections. Total £100.

PROGRESS AWARDS for entries published during the course of the contest. Total £200.

GRAND TOTAL £2500.

and neat, and glamor will not be necessary. A man likes a soap-and-water face with a touch of lipstick better than the whole works.

Sexual compatibility is an essential.

A woman should learn to cook and stick to good plain food in preference to fancy dishes. There is not much consolation in a frothy sponge cake to a man who has just had tough steak and watery vegetables dished up to him.

NEVER show your man up in public. We just can't take it, and you will put a crack in your marriage that will take a ton of soft soap and cement to fix. When we need a bawling-out, as we sometimes do, save it for the privacy of the home.

We love a word of praise. Not just gush or flattery, but if we have done something to make life happier for you, tell us, and you will find husbands just thrive on it.

£5 progress award to John Reville, 158 Cambridge St., Granville, Maryborough, Qld.

CONTEST RULES

ADDRESS your entries "Happy Marriage Contest," The Australian Women's Weekly, Box No. 5252, G.P.O., Sydney.

You may send in as many entries as you like, but each must be accompanied by a separate coupon.

Put your name and address in block letters at the top of each page of your entry. Write on one side of the paper only.

Written entries may be as short as you like, but should not exceed 250 words.

Copyright in all entries shall belong to Consolidated Press Ltd. Entries in the written sections will not be returned. They will be destroyed after the contest.

All care will be taken with photographs,

which will be returned after the contest, but no responsibility can be taken for any damaged or lost.

Prizes will be awarded in accordance with the judges' views of the relative merits of the entries received.

No correspondence will be entered into regarding the judges' decisions.

Employees of Consolidated Press Ltd. and its subsidiary companies are not eligible to enter the contest. Nor are their husbands, wives, parents, children, brothers, or sisters.

Finalists of sections two, three, and four will be asked to sign an affidavit of eligibility.

HAPPY MARRIAGE CONTEST

December 30, 1953. Paste one coupon on each entry.

I warrant that the accompanying entry is my own original work. (This does not apply to Section 4.)

I accept the conditions of entry and agree that the judges' decision will be final.

Signature
(Mr., Mrs., or Miss)

Address (block letters)

State



TO LIVE IN PAPUA. Stephen Smith and his bride, formerly Ann Young-Whitford, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. Young-Whitford, of Rose Bay, leave St. Michael's Church, Yaucluse.



TRIO. Carlie Scharff (left), John Bush, and Sue Primrose were among guests at the coming-out party of Janette Paris, Jill Odillo Maher, Robin Webb, and Margaret Reed, held at the Point Piper home of Mr. and Mrs. Cliff Poray.



BACK TO THE 'TWENTIES. From left, Clive Yeomans, Helen Wallace, Carla McMillan, and Peter Appleton as beaux and belles of the gay 'twenties at the party given by five young hostesses at the Woollahra Golf House.



LEAVING for the reception at Glen Ascham after their wedding at St. Mark's, Darling Point, are Ken Monro and his bride, formerly Sue Brunninghausen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Max Brunninghausen, of Bellevue Hill.



RECENTLY ENGAGED Rita Sean and Bill Furber toast each other with champagne at Prince's. Rita is the daughter of Mr. R. L. Sean, of Yaucluse.



AT RECOVERY BALL. Russell Quinn and Pamela Coleman at the ball given by the Sydney University Students' Representative Council at the Trocadero.



ATTRACTIVE Roslyn Danbar and Neil Forsyth at the Christmas party, which was held on board the Swedish ship M.F. Delos. More than 100 guests attended the party.

SOCIAL JOTTINGS

MORE than 800 merry-makers will gather to welcome the New Year at the Pacific Club, Palm Beach, for the annual party given by the Palm Beach Surf Life-saving Club.

Refugees from the crowded ballroom will be able to listen to the music of the non-stop band in the gardens of the club, which will be illuminated with fairy-lights.

And I'm told that many of the guests will take that indispensable accessory, a swimsuit, for a dip to freshen up after the party is over.

Among the guests will be Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Doyle, Mr. and Mrs. Alexis Albert, Mr. and Mrs. Claude Healy, Mr. and Mrs. George Falkner, of "Haddon Rig," Warren, and Mr. and Mrs. Bill Moses, of "Gunnible," Gunnedah.

THEY'RE ENGAGED . . .

Carmelita Walker, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. Walker, of Randwick, and Pat Kelly, son of Mr. and Mrs. M. Kelly, of Maroubra. Carmelita is wearing a solitaire diamond ring.

TINY scarlet hat, after the style worn by the Queen on the Royal tour, highlighted the severely tailored, dark brown dress worn by Lady Spender when she and her husband, the Australian Ambassador in America, Sir Percy Spender, arrived in Sydney by R.C.P.A. for a few weeks' holiday. Among those welcoming the Spenders at the airport were Lady Spender's brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Noel Hentze, of Turramurra.

AT the farewell party she gave for Jennifer and Sally Tatchell, Sara Hordern wore a cool white pique dress which she brought back from Paris this year. Sally chose a shell-pink and white striped nylon frock, and Jennifer's dress of black-figured pink cotton was accented with a black stole. Jennifer and Sally left in the Strathmore this week with their mother, Mrs. J. W. M. Eaton, and Rear-Admiral Eaton.

LACE christening robe made from the train of her mother's wedding gown was worn by Avril Frances Healey, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Healey, for her christening at St. Mark's, Darling Point. Mrs. Healey was formerly Lorna O'Keefe.

MRS. LIONEL COPPLESON tells me that her daughter, Fay, is writing very newsy letters home about her trip abroad. Fay left Sydney in July. The Copplesons have just received a cable to say that Fay has arrived in Switzerland—her first port of call on the Continent. After a skiing holiday in Switzerland, Germany, and Austria, Fay will return to England for the finish of the hunting season.



COUNTRY INTEREST. James Lomax and his bride, formerly Elwyn Bowman, daughter of Mrs. Bowman, of "Archerfield," Singleton, and the late Mr. Arthur Bowman, leave St. Mark's. Mr. and Mrs. Lomax will live in Surrey, England.

HOUSING problem for the next year has been solved for recently married Phillip and Margaret Johnston, as they are moving into the John Bentleys' house at Singleton, where they will live while the Bentleys are in England. Margaret is the daughter of the Tom Abbotts.

TWO sisters, Pat and Pauline Gray, of Darling Point, arrived home together in the Maloja last week. Pat has been abroad for four years, and has had a wonderful time visiting England and the Continent. Pauline has toured Europe and hitchhiked round England and Scotland. Mrs. Gray says that one day in Scotland Pauline was given a lift to the gates of Balmoral Castle in one of the Royal cars.

SQUARE - CUT sapphire ring with diamond shoulders is being worn by Dr. Elisabeth Ralston, who is engaged to Charles Wilkinson.

ENGLISH visitors Sir Horace and Lady Seymour will stay at "Caringle" for four weeks before coming down to a flat they have taken for a fortnight at Collaroy, where the Thompsons will join them.

After a leisurely five weeks' holiday in the Strathmore on their way to England, a very busy three months awaits Mrs. Selwyn Waddell, of Killara, and her son David. England, France, Italy, and Switzerland are included in their itinerary.

Anne

I make the franks and he makes the roll. Mr. Gruber, for example, says it's a marvellous idea.

"I might add that the experimental stage is over—our product is perfect. And now it is merely a question of selling the patent or licensing somebody. You know the way that is done—you make much more than that way."

"Have you tried?"
Mr. Haegeli came close, the inventor's excitement in his eyes now. "That is where the hitch comes in. On the last trip I saw the biggest frankfurter people in America; they're in New York. Well, the things you find out! They were very nice. The president received us, and he looked at the product and tasted it."

"He seemed to like it, because he called for his son and a man who works close to him. I think you've got something there," the old man said. I think with him we would have had clear sailing, but he had one of these wise guys for a son."

As Haegeli talked, he forgot completely about his dogs. He gesticulated with his hands, which were sticky with hash, using them as a boxer does when he talks with his gloves on.

Standing close to me, he held his hands away, lest dog food soil my clothes. He stood exactly right, with his back turned to Barbara as she slowly reached towards the door of Little Bit's cage.

It was all foiled again by the return of Mr. Gruber and Rolfe. Mr. Gruber kissed his dog goodnight and watched him as he slowly walked into his cage.

He said to Rolfe that it was only for two more nights that he had to be here. He wished us a goodnight also, and, after a final goodnight to his dog, he went.

"Where was I?" said the butcher.

"With the Frankroll, the old man, and the wine-guy son."

"Right. Well, the son was looking at our product doubtfully, and he took a bite out of it, and in the middle of it he stopped chewing. 'Mmmm,' he said, 'not bad, not bad at all. But—' He made a long pause, and then he said, 'What about the mustard, gentlemen?'"

"I said, 'All right, what

Continuing . . . The Dog That Travelled Incognito

[from page 26]

about the mustard?" So the wise guy says, 'I'm a customer, I'm buying; I'm at a hot-dog stand. I watch the man in the white jacket. He picks up the frankfurter roll that's been sliced and placed face down on the hot plate.'

"Then he picks it up in a sanitary fashion, takes the skinless frank with his fork, places it on the roll, and hands it to me. Now, I dip into the mustard pot—or maybe I decide on a little sauce—or maybe I want some relish. Anyway, I put all that on the frank—' He held out his hand.

"So I said, 'What's all that got to do with our Frankroll?'"

"So Junior says, 'A lot. Let me explain. It's got no appeal. Practical, maybe, but to put the mustard on the hot dog the customer would have to slice the bun first, and that leads us straight back to the old-fashioned frankfurter and the old-fashioned roll. This may be practical, but it's got no sizzle to it. No eye-appeal, no nose-appeal—it's no good.'"

"Well, the old man was confused, and he got up, and said that he'd like to think about it, and then he said he'd like to show us the factory. Well, you'd never think how important a thing a frankfurter is. This factory is shining."

He took a deep breath before continuing. "Now, there are two schools about frankfurters, the skin frank and the skinless. These people specialise in skinless ones, because the American housewife is so lazy she prefers it without the skin. But—did you know that the skinless comes with a skin and has to be peeled?"

"Now, there is a vast hall, and at long tables there sit hundreds of women, and music plays, and each has in her left hand a frankfurter and in the right a paring knife, and all day long they remove the skin from the frankfurters."

"An eight-hour day. And at the end of the room there is a first-aid station, because at the speed at which they work there is a great deal of laceration. The man there in charge—"

Barbara broke in, "Oh, please, Poppy, please!" she urged. "Let's get out of here."

"The man in charge there explained that in spite of elaborate safety precautions there was a great deal of absenteeism on account of carelessness. They had people working on a machine to skin the frankfurters."

"Now if you could invent a skinning device," said the old man to me, "you'd be a millionaire overnight. Well, we're not licked yet. You see the beauty of working on a ship is you have everything. One of the engineers is working with us on a skinning machine, and I have another outfit lined up for the Frankroll."

The light in Mr. Haegeli's eyes faded. He wiped his hand again on his apron, and I shook it, and slowly Barbara and I walked out on deck and down the first flight of stairs to A deck, and I said, "Run for your life, for by now he has discovered that Little Bit is gone."

We got into the cabin. Little Bit smiled on both sides of his face, and he bounced from floor to bed and to chair. There was a knock on the door.

The thrill of the cops-and-robbers game had begun. Little Bit had vanished. "Who is it?" Barbara asked.

It was the steward. "Did you find him?"

Barbara smiled.

"You got him back?"

Barbara nodded. "Oh, for heaven's sake, keep your dog out of sight?" the steward said. "That crazy butcher is capable of anything from now on. I got a wife and family." The steward was not one to bathe in the dark waters of conspiracy.

"From now on the dog must not be left," I said to Barbara. "He must go with us wherever we go, to the dining-room, on deck, to the lounge, and to the movies. And you can't carry him around in that bag; you'll have to cover him with a scarf or have him inside your coat."

Barbara started going about as if her arm were in a sling. The steward averted his eyes

whenever he met us, and he didn't bring any more dog food.

Mr. Gruber said, "The kennel-man suspects you of having removed the dog from the kennel."

"We did."

"Good," said the actor. "Anything I can do, I will."

"Well, act as if you didn't know anything about it. How is Rolfe?"

"Oh, Rolfe is fine. You know he's never bitten anybody in his life, except that kennel-man."

Mr. Gruber offered to get Little Bit off the boat. He said he had a wicker basket in which he carried some of Rolfe's things, and he would carry Little Bit off the America; for the butcher would watch us closely—if he didn't find the dog before—and catch us at the customs.

"Isn't Mr. Gruber a nice man?" Barbara said. "People always say such mean things about movie actors."

Camouflaged in his scarf, Little Bit rested on Barbara's lap during meals. On the deck chair he lay motionless between my feet, covered by the steamer rug. He travelled about under Barbara's coat, and he took his exercise secretly on the afterdeck, while I watched from above.

After the morning walk the next day, the steward knocked, and he looked worried.

"The butcher was here," he said, "and he went all over the room. He found the dish with Always Faithful on it, on the bathroom floor."

"How could we be so careless?" I said, my pride hurt.

"And of course he saw the bag with Little Bit printed on it. I said I didn't know anything about a dog."

We doubled our precautions. Little Bit's mouth was down at the edges with worry. I contemplated what to do.

After all, there was only one more day, and if the worst happened we could sit upstairs near the kennel with Little Bit, the way Mr. Gruber sat with Rolfe.

I said to Barbara, "Perhaps it would be best to pay the passage and have it over with."

"No, you can't do that—think of the poor steward and his family."

"Well, we could settle that, I think, with the butcher, anyway. I don't like to cheat the line."

"Well, Poppy, you can send them a cheque after, if that worries you, or drink a few bottles of champagne, or buy something in the shop."

There was a knock on the door.

"Who is it?"

"The purser, sir."

"Please come in."

The door opened, and outside, behind the purser, stood Mr. Haegeli.

"Just wanted to look and see if everything was all right," the purser said. "Are you comfortable, sir? Anything I can do?"

"Everything is fine."

"By the way, sir," the purser went on, "we are looking

for a small white dog that's been lost. We wondered if by any chance it is in here."

"Come in, look for yourself," I said.

"That's quite all right, sir. Excuse the intrusion. Good evening." The purser closed the door.

"What a nice man!" said Barbara.

The butcher was excluded from pursuing us in the public rooms of the ship. He couldn't follow us to the movies or the dining-room. But he seemed to have spies.

"What a lovely scarf you have there, miss!" said the elevator boy, and after that we used the stairs.

The butcher came on deck and followed us on the evening promenade around the deck, while Little Bit sat inside my overcoat and I held him in place with my right hand, in a Napoleonic pose.

We made four turns around deck. We saw the butcher's shadow on the wall near the stairs several times. He seemed to be nerving a nervous breakdown.

Mr. Gruber told us that he had sworn we had the dog and that he meant to find it at any cost. There was one more night to go, and the next day the ship would dock.

At ten Barbara would deliver Little Bit to Mr. Gruber, and we would fill the bag in which he travelled with paper handkerchiefs, tobacco, soap, extra toothbrushes, razor blades, dental floss and other things, all of which can be had in Europe but which, for some droll reason, one always takes along.

Little Bit was fed from luncheon trays which we ordered for ourselves in the cabin instead of going down to lunch.

The steward was shaking. "I don't know when that guy takes care of the other dogs," he said. "He's hanging around here all the time. I hope you'll get off all right."

It was the last night on board. The sun had set again, and we came up on the promenade deck to take the evening walk. The butcher was there, following us.

He walked faster than usual. It was cold and windy. I went inside with Barbara and drank a cocktail in the bar, and Barbara, with her lemonade in her hand, suddenly said, "He's watching us through the third window."

I looked quickly towards the left side of the room; the butcher's face was pressed against the glass, pale and haunting.

He kept watch from the outside, and ran back and forth as we moved about inside.

We went to the dining-room. When we came back I got a cigar, and he was outside the bar. When I went to the saloon to have coffee, he was outside the window.

"Don't give Little Bit any sugar," Barbara said. "He's watching us."

Sailors were clearing the floor for dancing and we got up to walk back to the library. There is a windowless passage between the main saloon and

the library, and off this passage is the gift shop.

On this last evening people stood there in numbers buying cigarettes, film, small sailors hats, miniature lifebelts, and ship models with "SS America" written on them.

Here I suddenly realised the miraculous solution of our problem. It was in front of me, on a shelf. Among an assortment of toy animals, stuffed Mickey Mice, Donald Ducks, and Teddy bears of various sizes stood the exact replica of Little Bit—the same button eyes, patent-leather nose, the fluff, the sticklike legs, the pom-pom at the end of the tail, and a red ribbon in his hair.

"How much is that dog?" I asked the young lady.

"It's two ninety-five, sir," she replied.

"I'll take it."

"Shall I wrap it up, sir?"

"No, thanks. I'll take it as it is."

"What are we going to do now, Poppy?"

"Now you keep Little Bit hidden, and I'll take the stuffed dog, and we'll go into the library."

We sat down, and I placed the stuffed dog at my side and spoke to it. The butcher was on the far side of the ship, but he almost went through the window. Then he disappeared and ran around to the other side.

I had arranged it so that the dog seemed to be sleeping at my side, partly covered by Barbara's scarf. I told her to take Little Bit down to the cabin and then to come back and we'd have some fun with the butcher.

When she came back, Barbara took the toy dog and fixed its hair and combed the fluff, and then I said, "Please give me the dog."

We walked the length of the ship on the inside. The butcher was sprinting outside, his face appearing, flashlike, in a series of windows.

At the front of the ship we went out on deck, and I held the dog so that the white pom-pom stuck out in back, and I wiggled it a little to give it the illusion of life.

It took the butcher a while to catch up. He walked fast; we walked faster. He almost ran; we ran. He shouted, "Mister!" I continued running; and as we approached the stern I said, "Can you let out a terrible scream?"

"Yes, of course," said Barbara.

"One, two, three—now."

As she screamed, we got to the end of the ship. I threw the dog in a wide curve out into the sea.

The butcher, only a few feet away, gripped the railing and looked below, where the small white form bobbed up and down in the turbulent water and was rapidly washed away in the wake of the America.

I turned to go back into the saloon.

We left the butcher paralysed at the stern of the America. He was not at the gangplank the next day, and on the return trip there was another man in charge of the kennels.

(Copyright)

Continuing . . . First Noel

[from page 11]

red, white, and blue brocaded robe.

Little Mary stood dumb-founded.

She gazed into the priceless diamond, and the colors flashing from it blinded her eyes. She blinked and gazed into the priceless sapphire. She tucked in her chin and looked down at a priceless ruby adorning her flat little chest. The fire in the heart of the ruby burnt right into her eyes.

"Color!" she gasped. "Oh! Color is just lovely!"

She looked up to thank them, but they had gone . . . quickly . . . majestically . . . quietly.

There was silence, deep silence in a stable.

Mary tucked the blue and white stones into her robe on either side of the red stone, totally ignorant of their great value. She crouched by the side of a manger. She peeped at a little boy who appeared to be asleep.

Suddenly his eyes opened for a moment, and they seemed to smile at little Mary. Perhaps, she thought, he was smiling at the pretty stones on her robe. Perhaps he ought to give them to him. But—no. She felt sure the three great men meant her to keep them. She felt sure Joseph and his wife would

like her to keep them for herself.

Her head began to nod. Perhaps it was the feast of color made her feel sleepy. "You know," she murmured drowsily, "birthdays are lovely times. And this has been my loveliest birthday. I suppose it's because it's been such a lovely day. I really suppose it's because Jesus has had His birthday at my home."

"Please, I'd like to call our birthday—Jesus' and mine—some name. Please, do you mind? Please, I'd like to call each and every one of the birthdays we have after today, some name, but I just don't know what to call it."

Mary stole a peep at a quiet girl whose golden hair was thrown by the lights into bold relief. The mysterious depths of her wonderful eyes were luminous as the stars.

Joseph looks funny, thought little Mary. He's pulling at his beard and wiping his eyes. Perhaps he's tired. Then she heard him saying something and she listened intently.

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The kind eyes of Joseph were upon her. "For unto you is born . . . a Saviour . . . Christ the Lord . . ."

For the second time on this eventful birthday little Mary's eyes were still and wide open. Of course! How could she have forgotten! Was she not a little Jewess?

Had she not often heard the talk that went on in the village about the King of Israel who was to come and free his people? Her parents had often told her the wonderful story of the Christ.

Dear innocent eyes peeped into a manger. "YOU are the ONE," whispered little Mary. "Indeed, you ARE the ONE."

The dear little face of the loveliest child of Bethlehem turned shyly to a quiet girl and an understanding man.

"Please," little Mary blinked dewy eyes. "Please, if you don't mind, I know now what to call our birthday—Jesus' and mine. Please, if you don't mind, I'd like to call it . . . Christ's Day."

Then it was this sweet child's cup of happiness was filled to overflowing. Then it was this dear child received her most glorious birthday present. Then it was God smiled sweetly upon a child of Bethlehem.

Swiftly, with incomparable grace, Mary the Mother of Jesus bent down and kissed little Mary.

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IN AND OUT OF SOCIETY

YOU SEEM A VERY NICE BOY, HAVE YOU BEEN GOOD LATELY?

YES SANTA VERY GOOD.

THAT'S WHAT I LIKE, GOOD QUIET GENTLE BOYS! NOW WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE FOR XMAS?

A REAL SIX-SHOOTER A DAGGER AND KNUCKLE-DUSTERS!!

By RUD

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY - December 30, 1953

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THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY - December 30, 1953



"Only 365 days till next Christmas!"



"Oh, all right. We'll buy one on our way to th' hideout. Now will ya come on?"

Worth Reporting

THE New Year season being traditionally a Scottish celebration, we hurried along to the studio in Ultimo, Sydney, where Mrs. Mabel McInnes teaches local youngsters to dance to the bagpipes.

The bagpipes kept on skirling as we watched boys and girls dancing on demi-points, and high-cutting (hitting the side of one calf with the opposite foot, we gathered).

We got a colorful impression of clan tartans, matching hose (which cost £4/10/- a pair), thistle buttons, cockaded balmorals, black vests, kilts, and Highland pumps.

Between dances, Mrs. McInnes told us the legend of the Highland Fling:

"A lad and his grandfather were out in the woods when a young deer, his antlers all ruddy, came springing from brook to brook, lifting and leaping. The grandfather said to the boy, Alistair, 'You couldn't do that, laddie.'"

"I could," said Alistair. He imitated the deer, and that's how the Highland Fling began."

Tireless as Robert Bruce's spider, we next called on Mr. Hector McKenzie at his tailoring shop in the nearby suburb of Newtown. Mr. McKenzie is president of the Highland Society of N.S.W.

"The mitheilicht ar faicinn," he said and explained: "That's Gaelic for 'I'm glad to see you!'"

Formed in 1932 to promote friendship and knowledge of the mother tongue among Gaelic exiles, the Highland Society of N.S.W. has 48 members at present.

We learnt from Mr. McKenzie that young Highlanders in Australia were not as keen as they might be about the language and customs of their native country.

"How about dancing?" we asked.

"Oh, they enjoy that," he said, "particularly the Four-some Reel and the Highland Reel. But the Strip The Willow, which is a Royal favorite, is not Scottish at all."

"Every English-speaking country can claim the Strip The Willow," went on Mr. McKenzie without a hint of disdain in his voice, and we drew the conclusion that he is an unprejudiced man. "It's more like the Lancers or the Quadrilles than anything else."

We thanked Mr. McKenzie for the interview, and walked out into the braw bright moonlight night.

Help for a deaf pensioner

SOME of our readers might like to post on their copies of the "Weekly" to Miss Lucy White, 26 Rostown St., Hr. Broughton, Salford 8, Lancashire, England.

Miss White, a pensioner, is deaf and also lame. In a letter she told us that she had been lent copies of the paper some months ago, had read them and passed them on to other pensioners.

"Now the winter months are coming, the days and nights seem so long," wrote Miss White. "Being deaf, I cannot have a wireless, and lameness through two bad fractures makes it that I cannot go out much. I hope you won't think this awful cheek when I ask if anyone would send me their old copies."

We don't think it "awful cheek" at all, and we're sure someone will oblige her.

Grasshoppers on ice

AMERICAN scientists are busy at the moment studying "grasshopper glaciers," according to a UNESCO bulletin.

These are glaciers in which layers of hoppers are deep frozen. Scientists believe that hundreds of years ago flying swarms were caught by winds which dropped them over the mountains, embedding them in ice and snow.

These "grasshopper glaciers" also exist in North Africa. Unfortunately, as Australian farmers realise, there are no glaciers in this continent.

Religious story competition

FOUR hundred and thirteen stories were entered in the First Annual Religious Short Story Quest conducted by St. Mark's Literary Guild, Granville, N.S.W.

The Rector of St. Mark's, the Rev. C. L. Oliver, M.A., told us that two-thirds of the entries came from women. "The First Noel," by Stuart E. Marshall, of Brisbane, which won a special prize for the best Christmas story, is published in this issue, beginning on page 10.

Winner of the £100 First Prize was Mrs. R. Padgett, of The Grange, Brisbane, whose story "Mamta, the Afghan," was the unanimous choice of the judges.

N.S.W. took second prize with Mr. R. D. Tate's story "The Singing Stone."

Cooking up something new

WE went along to watch Sydney chef Woody Faulkner toss pancakes with nonchalant ease and cook a tender Steak Diane (done with garlic and sauces and diabolical bursts of flame) on a new glamor gas stove that has just reached Australia.

Woody, who is secretary of the Sydney branch of the International Academy of Chefs de Cuisine and hails from New York, looked the part in his spotless white gown and tall white hat.

To our womanly eye the stove also looked the part.

It has a big oven, four cooking plates with lift-off grease traps underneath, a separate warming cabinet, and a grill placed at eye level, which cooks nine chops at once. Incidentally, we watched the grill in action. It didn't spit fat, as we'd suspected it might.

To our way of thinking a revolutionary feature of the stove is that it doesn't need those matches we can never put our hand on at the right moment. To light a jet you simply touch a button and presto! the heat's on.

First Australian to acquire one of the new models are Mr. David Green and his wife, Dr. Zelda Green, of Bondi, Sydney, who "operate" a mechanised, press-button home equipped with most labor-saving devices.

"Science makes housework easy," Dr. Green told us, "and saves time."

Dr. Green's time is worth saving. Besides running her own medical practice and doing occasional locums, she looks after her business-going husband and their 12-month-old baby with streamlined efficiency.

"There's nothing to it," she said. "It's just a matter of keeping the household organised on modern lines."

ON a recent weekend a man we know clad in a faded football jersey, ex-army shorts, and muddy boots, was grubbing up the onion weed when a small boy and his well-dressed mother halted to watch.

"What's THAT?" demanded the child of his mother, pointing at the gardener.

"That is a man," mother replied with asperity. "And that—" she pulled her son on his way—"is what you'll grow up to be like if you keep smoking your father's cigarettes!"

Continuing . . . The Sack From Santa

[from page 3]

of buttons and bobby-pins, kerosene, and clothes-pegs.

He was worried about his uncle's seemingly docile acceptance of Miss Bickerstaffe's dictums; the woman was becoming a menace! Mr. Ralph muttered evil words, stuffed his pipe into his pocket, and paced restlessly up and down.

Of course, thought Mr. Ralph, endeavoring to be fair, Miss Bickerstaffe was highly qualified and very capable; Miss Gappen had been too old for the job, daily mislaying important letters, daily slower and more inaccurate over her typing; but at least, during her epoch, there had been harmony in the office.

The affairs of the firm had simmered peacefully as they had simmered for the best part of forty years; now it was as if there had been a furious boiling over. Through Miss Bickerstaffe, new filing systems had been introduced, proof against the most feather-headed of the typists, causing Miss Waddell to bridle like an angry hippopotamus; new letter and order books now ensured that all communications were double-checked and acknowledged by return of post; a dozen small, but none the less irritating, reforms had been made in the old, comfortable routine of the office.

Admittedly these had saved time and money, and admittedly the burden of Mr. Truegood's work had been lightened considerably—Miss Bickerstaffe must be given the credit she deserved, thought Mr. Ralph angrily. The basic and unpleasant truth was that he himself had not been pulling his weight; his uncle had taken him into partnership on his return from Korea, and after the sweat and dust and grinding turmoil of the front, he had regarded the job as the cushiest piece of cake.

He knew he had been loafing, but he resented that this should have been brought home to him with such force by Miss Bickerstaffe. She was perfectly polite, even respectful, but she made him feel inferior and inadequate. And Mr. Ralph, after heroic, if unsung, exploits in Korea, disliked this most intensely.

And to crown it all, he had to act the giddy goat at the Christmas party.

Mr. Truegood, an old gentleman of Pickwickian appearance and fatherly inclinations, loved the annual gathering of the office personnel, their wives and children, parents and boy-friends; he was in his element as a kind of super-benevolent patriarch.

Mr. Ralph was tongue-tied with children and untactful with mothers; at the prospect of dressing up in a red hood and doling out presents, he felt like an ill-tempered bear dragged suddenly out of hibernation and ordered to dance.

A discreet knock on the door sent Mr. Ralph flying back to his desk.

"Come in," he said irritably, and knew it would be Miss Bickerstaffe before her honey-golden head appeared.

"Could you spare me a minute, Mr. Ralph?" she asked, and he was maddeningly aware that she realised he had only just snatched up Hubcock Pty.'s file.

"Yes?" Mr. Ralph pretended to be absorbed in the file. Miss Bickerstaffe's long, slim hand reached out, took the file, turned it the right way up and gave it back to him. Mr. Ralph, to his acute annoyance, felt himself crimson; he slammed the file on the desk.

"Yes? What is it, Miss Bickerstaffe?" He would like to have added "this time," but didn't.

"It's about the sack, Mr. Ralph. Your Father Christmas sack. Mr. Truegood is giving the typists chocolates this year instead of diaries, and so you'll need a much bigger one. The chocolates are to be in boxes, you see, big ones, tied with ribbons."

"Another of your ideas, Miss Bickerstaffe?"

"Why, yes, Mr. Truegood asked for my opinion, and I told him when I was a teenager I would much rather have had a box of chocolates than a diary. I thought of red satin for the sack. Shall I get the material and make it up?"

"And what," inquired Mr. Ralph, frowning, "would be wrong with an ordinary sack?"

"Made of ordinary gunny?"

"For Father Christmas? Oh, I think something more festive than gunny, Mr. Ralph."

Mr. Ralph glared at Miss Bickerstaffe. Her calm eyes met his, and he looked away hastily; they were very lovely eyes.

"If I am going to be Father Christmas," said Mr. Ralph with heavy sarcasm, "I must be allowed to choose my own sack. I shall have to carry it. I will have an ordinary gunny sack—there should be plenty in the stockroom of the right size. Is that quite clear, Miss Bickerstaffe?"

"Yes, Mr. Ralph. Quite. I had no idea you would feel so strongly over a sack." Was

it his imagination, or was there a faint suspicion of mockery curving Miss Bickerstaffe's mouth? She was so darned beautiful, and so darned self-possessed, thought Mr. Ralph impotently. He had an ignoble desire to pierce the exquisite repose of her demeanour.

"That will be all, Miss Bickerstaffe," he said icily. "Send Miss Ollop to me, please. And don't disturb me again over unimportant details."

She flushed, and he thought he had succeeded, but the pink faded from the creamy cheeks as quickly as it had come; she said quietly: "Very well, Mr. Ralph."

When she had gone, Mr. Ralph cursed himself for a boor and a bumpkin, and attacked the "JN" tray ferociously; he would work now, really work, he told himself, and he would put Miss Bickerstaffe out of his mind.

Miss Ollop came tripping in, pencil and notebook ready.

"Oh, Mr. Ralph," she twittered, "I wanted to consult you about Miss Bickerstaffe—"

Mr. Ralph groaned and clutched his forehead. Was he never to escape from the woman? Miss Ollop gazed at him in astonishment, and then continued: "Miss Bickerstaffe's Christmas present. I wanted to ask you—"

"What possible concern of mine is Miss Bickerstaffe's Christmas present?" demanded Mr. Ralph.

Miss Ollop launched into a flood of words. She and Miss Gappen had done the Christmas shopping for ten years; and now, this year, Mr. Truegood had said that, as she had so much extra work, due to all the re-organisation, Miss Bickerstaffe, with Mrs. Truegood's help, would buy the presents.

It wasn't fair to her (Miss Ollop) or to Miss Waddell, who was next in seniority, that they had been pushed aside for a newcomer to the firm. And besides, she and Miss Waddell knew just what everyone liked—how could Miss Bickerstaffe, who had been here only a few months, have any idea what was suitable and usual for the gifts?

Mr. Ralph braved the torrent: "Yes, yes, Miss Ollop. I quite agree. But what do you expect me to do about it?"

"Oh, nothing, Mr. Ralph. It's only that naturally Miss Bickerstaffe can't buy her own present. Mr. Truegood said Miss Waddell and I could do that,

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★ As I read the stars ★ By EVE HILLIARD

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Projects begun on December 29 may encounter unlooked-for obstacles on January 2, but January 4 ranks high in the success column.

TAURUS (April 21-May 20): January 1 is particularly favorable for short journeys and outings to new places. January 4 may put you in the way of a good business deal.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21): December 30 is the likely moment for receiving a small bonus, finding a lost article, or gaining material advantages. Good news on January 3.

CANCER (June 22-July 22): Moonlight and roses, December 30, for all lovers young in heart. Domestic harmony or increased popularity with your social set, January 4.

[The Australian Women's Weekly presents this astrological diary as a feature of interest only, without accepting any responsibility whatever for the statements contained in it.]

LEO (July 23-August 22): If you're looking for a change in employment, December 29 may hold a hint of fresh possibilities. It favors transactions in property. December 30 develops all kinds of bright new schemes.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Advertise your talents, explore new territory, be bold in making changes, December 31. January 1 is ideal for pleasure seekers, both young and old.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Those fixing up the old homestead may have decisions to make, December 30. Novel ways of entertaining may give a new look to your week-end activities.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): January 1 arrangements may backfire or minor upsets may cause postponements, but January 3 will more than compensate for previous disappointment.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 20): You might suddenly light on exactly what you want, December 29. December 31 is top flight for a bit of extra money. Keep your eyes open.

CAPRICORN (December 21-January 19): Be steady as a rock in your relationships with other people. January 2 may test them to the utmost. January 4 brings the reward of knowing you did the right thing.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 19): Either December 29 or 31 is likely to produce petty worries and minor illnesses, but January 1 should see them vanish and confidence restored.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Boy meets girl may be a feature of December 29. Rapidly developing friendships make the days to January 3 memorable. All social interests important to elders.

so we wondered if you'd any suggestions to make—none of us really knows much about Miss Bickerstaffe, Mr. Ralph—!"

To his utter amazement, Mr. Ralph found himself thinking of jade earrings dangling from Miss Bickerstaffe's small ears, of pearls, less pearls than the skin of her throat, of immense bouquets of rare orchids, no more exotic than herself. He must be going crazy, he thought, crashing his fist on the desk. Miss Ollop jumped.

"Get something sensible, Miss Ollop," said Mr. Ralph grimly. "A pen-tray for her desk—or a calendar—one of those things you turn round each day."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Ralph, I think that would be just right. What a brainwave. Thanks ever so."

"And now, could we do some work? Take this, please, Miss Ollop. Messrs. Doyabjee Bhat-tacharjee, Bombay. Dear Sirs—"

Miss Ollop had an exhausting hour and went back to the typists' room crumbling that Mr. Ralph was getting quite a martinet these days, and even if he was annoyed with Miss Bickerstaffe, it wasn't fair that she could have to bear the brunt of it.

Mr. Truogood and Mr. Ralph lunched together as usual. Mr. Truogood, who was exceedingly fond of his nephew, noticed with concern his unwanted taciturnity.

"I do believe," he said at length, "that you're still worrying about this Father Christmas business, Ralph. You know, once you're dressed and Drusie has made you up, you'll feel quite different. You'll be splendid."

Ralph plunged: "It's not only that, Uncle, though I still don't know why you were so keen on my doing it. Look, I know I've been a heel—I guess I'm only just beginning to get back a kind of perspective on civvy life. But couldn't you have given me a pep talk yourself, and not left it to your secretary to show me that I'm a lazy so-and-so?"

Mr. Truogood folded his napkin and placed it with deliberation beside his plate. He spoke hesitantly, and his very blue eyes were sad.

"I'd no idea you felt that way, Ralph. I can see I'll have to tell you something I hadn't wanted to—yet. Perhaps because it's a confession of defeat. The fact is, I hadn't been feeling so good, and Drusie nattered at me until I went to a doctor. He said I'd got to take things a lot more easily."

Ralph jerked: "Gosh, Uncle! I'm sorry. I wish I'd known. What's the trouble?"

"Only old age," Mr. Truogood grimaced. "And a tired heart. I've got to remember continuously that I'm an old codger. Hence the shifting of the major part of the work on to your shoulders—and hence Miss Bickerstaffe." He smiled at his nephew. "I was even forbidden to undertake Father Christmas."

"I should have realised. I've been all kinds of a selfish ironog." "

"No. I wanted to carry on as long as possible because I knew you'd need a period of rehabilitation—shall we call it? I was in World War I, Ralph, and I know what it's like to come back to an office. It all seems so narrow and unimportant, doesn't it?"

"Perhaps. But don't make excuses for me, Uncle."

"I don't have to. After Christmas I'm going away for a long holiday, Ralph. And so you'll be in charge. I've—every confidence in your ability."

"It's good to hear you say that. I'll do my very best."

"I know you will. And so will all the others. Bless them. There's something else, Ralph. About Miss Bickerstaffe—"

Ralph stubbed out his cigarette, squashing the butt to a pulp.

Continuing . . . The Sack From Santa

"Does she have to crop up, Uncle?"

Mr. Truogood ordered a small brandy with his coffee. "Strictly forbidden," he said, "but, after all, it's almost Christmas. As I was saying, about Miss Bickerstaffe. Will you keep her on?"

"As my secretary? Heaven forbid! Ollie'll do me."

"A pity," Mr. Truogood studied the tablecloth. "Why do you dislike Miss Bickerstaffe so much, Ralph?"

"Because," Ralph corrugated his forehead horribly, "she's officious and conceited. She's a soulless automaton."

"You know, my boy, in life—all aspects of life—but most particularly in an office, one has to be somewhat of a psychologist. Hasn't it ever occurred to you that Miss Bickerstaffe's manner might be a kind of—camouflage?"

"No. It hasn't," Ralph stared at his uncle.

"Then think it over. Miss Bickerstaffe is really very vulnerable, poor child. And you will never get a more efficient secretary. Now, with regard to that shipment for Papua—"

Mr. Truogood began a discussion on business which lasted until they arrived back at the office.

Miss Bickerstaffe was waiting for Mr. Truogood with a glass of water and a small bottle of tablets.

"Your medicine, Mr. Truogood."

"Thank you, my dear. Tiresome stuff," Mr. Truogood swallowed two of the pills, and drank the water. "Ah-h. Now bring me the list of presents, Angela, will you? My wife will be in town this afternoon, and she wanted to finish the shopping."

"Yes, Mr. Truogood. Here it is. Those underlined in red are for the three children—Mr. Wurrock's—who won't be able to come because of measles. I thought playing cards and cut-out dolls for them, so that they can amuse themselves in bed."

"Very nice. Yes. Cigarettes for the junior clerks. Yes, and a wallet for Mr. Perkey, initialed. Yes," Mr. Truogood went over all the items on the long list; Ralph was not listening, he was wondering whether "Angela" suited Miss Bickerstaffe. Somehow, he had never thought of her having a christian name. "Angela," yes, that hair, those eyes, were rather angelic.

Back in his own office, Ralph made a pre-New Year resolution to be nicer to Miss Bickerstaffe, and to think about her less. The affairs of the firm must come before anything else now.

Nevertheless, when Mrs. Truogood popped her head round his door an hour later he was still staring at the ceiling, oblivious of the mute appeal of the letters waiting for his signature.

"Hallo, Ralph," his aunt said cheerfully. "You do look busy, I don't think! Can you come and have dinner this evening? I want you to try on the Father Christmas regalia. You're so tall, I'll have to lengthen the hem on the coat."

Ralph rose hurriedly: "Good to see you, Aunt Drusie. Yes, thanks. I'd like to come. Your cooking will be a treat after my landlady's efforts. I say, I am sorry about Uncle. He told me at lunchtime."

"Did he? Thank goodness for that. You don't know how worried I've been, Ralph. You know what he's like—never thinks of himself. He wouldn't have anyone told because he didn't want to cast a gloom over his precious Christmas party—and he wanted you to get used to being back. I think I'd have had a nervous breakdown if it hadn't been for Miss Bickerstaffe. She's been marvellous."

"Miss Bickerstaffe's known—"

"—all the time?" "She had to, dear. Because of the medicine. Joe has to take it every three hours, and he's reminded every blinking time. I must go. We've got a shopping list a yard long. Bye, Ralph. Come about eightish."

She flew off, and Ralph began to think of all the things he ought to say to Miss Bickerstaffe, and of all the things he would like to say to Angela; they were all by way of being humble apologies, but the latter were considerably less formal than the former.

Arriving at the Truogoods' that evening, he was taken aback to find Miss Bickerstaffe sitting in the middle of the living-room floor, surrounded by parcels of all shapes and sizes; she had on a very full-skirted dress with flowers all over it, and her hair curled softly about her neck. She appeared very different from the severely tailored Miss Bickerstaffe of the office.

Mrs. Truogood shot out of the kitchen: "There you are, Help Angela, there's a good boy. Dinner won't be ready for ages. I'm having trouble with the sauce—this is the third time I've thickened the stuff—too thin!"

She vanished, leaving Ralph wondering what to say to the floral vision on the floor. Before he could think of the right way to word his apology, Miss



"Do you really want it, or do you just want to see if I can find it?"

Bickerstaffe said, with the coldness and sweetness of ice-cream: "It's quite all right, Mr. Ralph. I can manage by myself."

Ralph stuttered: "But I'd like to help. Please let me." He sat uncomfortably and undignifiedly beside her.

"Look, I want to say I'm sorry," said Ralph desperately, "but I don't know how to begin."

"Sorry for what? Could you put your finger here?" Miss Bickerstaffe proffered a package, and Ralph applied his finger firmly to the knot.

"I know about Uncle. He told me today. And he told me how—wonderful you've been," burst out Ralph, wincing as she tightened the knot round his finger; he removed it hastily.

"I apologise for being such a pain in the neck in the office, and for being so rude this morning. Could you forgive me—and could I be allowed to call you Angela?"

He drew a deep breath, feeling much more frightened than when he had been confronted with shrieking hordes of commos. But to his huge relief, Miss Bickerstaffe actually smiled, displaying two deep and heavenly dimples.

"Certainly I forgive you. And certainly call me Angela. I get awfully tired of having to be Miss Bickerstaffe all the time. I expect I'm infuriating in the office. But—well—it's all been a bit of a strain." She held out another parcel for his finger; Ralph applied another one this time and withdrew it at the right instant.

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"It must have been," he said sympathetically. "What on earth are those things?" "Space guns. For the boys."

He laughed: "Space guns, indeed! The boys have been presented with pencil-boxes ever since. I can remember. I used to get them."

"I expect you hated them. Children loathe being reminded of school at parties. I know how I used to curl up inside when aunts and things asked: 'And when do you go back to school?' when I'd only been home about two days."

"Too right. And what's that?" asked Ralph as she wrapped another parcel. "Sweet Siren perfume. For Miss Waddell."

"Blimey! She won't know what to do with it!"

"Oh yes she will. She's wanted some for years and never been able to afford it. She keeps her invalid mother, you know. Poor dear, in spite of her looks she yearns for romance and—frivolity."

"Look, how do you know all these things?"

"Oh, I just do. I notice people—and things. I use my eyes and ears. And Mr. Truogood told me a lot."

"What have you got for Ollie?" Ralph was enthralled. "Miss Ollop? Oh, she was easy. That little manicure set. It's got the very latest pearl-ined nail-polish in it."

"Nail-polish? That paint stuff? But she doesn't use it." Ralph pictured Miss Ollop's large, square hands.

"She will. She has very nice nails and she keeps them beautifully. But she's just never thought of varnishing them or maybe she never got around to trying varnish."

Ralph thought guiltily of how he had agreed with Miss Ollop's tirade about Miss Bickerstaffe's shopping for the presents.

"I think you're a better psychologist than Uncle," he said "housefully" and then, rapt, the floral vision had string off her skirt, and was now holding out a large sack.

"Don't you think it's pretty?" she said artlessly. "I'm afraid it isn't gunny after all. Mrs. Truogood said gunny would be horrid. So we bought the material this afternoon and we made it this evening. That's why dinner's late."

The sack was of scarlet satin ornamented with tufts of cotton-wool frosted to resemble snow; there were sprigs of holly stitched on it. Ralph looked at the sack for a moment and then at Angela for a long while.

"It's very pretty," he said politely. "But you're absolutely the most lovely thing I've ever seen in my life," he added fervently.

Mrs. Truogood erupted from the kitchen: "Dinner's ready! Go and call Joe, Ralph. He's in the bedroom having a lie down." Ralph, on the way to the bedroom, was certain that Angela had blushed—and not with anger this time.

He enjoyed dinner, not because he had any idea what he ate but because Angela smiled at him through the bucolic arrangement of flowers; he enjoyed washing-up, because Angela dried the dishes; even though it was a hot night he enjoyed the trying-on of the Father Christmas outfit because Angela tacked on the white wool hem; he enjoyed the ensuing game of solo when Angela propped and he was able to cop. Or vice-versa.

And at last came the time he had, in the depths of his subconscious mind, looked forward to more than anything else.

"May I drive you home, Angela?" asked Ralph.

There was some odd constraint upon them during the drive, but when Ralph stopped the car, Angela murmured an invitation to come in and have some coffee.

Ralph assured her that there was nothing he craved more than a cup of coffee.

They climbed a great many stairs to the small flat; where Angela was in the kitchenette pressing over the percolator, Ralph glanced around him, taking the uncluttered charming lounge with its big window framing the many-starred sky and the tracery of tree-tops. Then he saw the photograph of the very good-looking young man in R.A.A.F. uniform; he was eyeing it jealously when Angela came in with the coffee-pot.

"That's Charles. My brother. He was killed two years ago. Her voice was level and unemotional."

Ralph heard himself saying: "That's why you're so unhappy. That's why you were miles away under layers of camouflage netting."

"How did you know? I suppose Mr. Truogood told you I was unhappy. You can't hide things from him. Her lovely face was cold now, and hard. The way it was in the office. When she was Miss Bickerstaffe."

"I suggested there was something. Was it very—bad, Angela?"

"Yes. But I don't want pity." She handed him his cup. "Sugar? Cream?"

"Yes and yes. Thanks. Couldn't you tell me about it?"

"No. Forget it, as I've tried to."

"One doesn't forget that kind of thing, Angela. But it wouldn't burn you up so, if you'd stop locking it inside you. That's what you've been doing, isn't it?"

Ralph felt suddenly incredibly wise and protective and all-powerful. How right Uncle had been. She was so very, very vulnerable. "Tell me about him. What sort of person he was. How it happened. Everything. Maybe it would help. I know it would help," said Ralph gently.

She told him then of the adored brother who had been killed when his kite crashed somewhere in the lonely mountains; they hadn't even found him, or any trace of the plane.

"He'd only had his wings for three weeks," said Angela.

"He was gay and confident, and he thought life was perfection. So did I—once. We were very much alike. We only had each other because Mother and Daddy died when we were so little, and we endured living with a succession of unwilling relations. So it was like heaven when we were both earning money and could have our own flat—he used to love this place because it was high up."

"We had such fun. Then he got killed. It all seemed so pointless and—wrong. I wasn't brave at all. I just went to picnics. When I started to pick them up and make them into me again, they didn't fit. I wasn't—I couldn't be—the same. I was Miss Bickerstaffe, who had to get another job or go back to the relations. I had one or two temporary posts, and then—well—I came to Truogood."

"And I was going to give her the sack," thought Ralph miserably, and simultaneously he had a brilliant and foolish idea.

He put both arms round Angela and told her all the things he'd never thought he'd ever have the courage to say to any woman. And when she broke down at last and cried, he thought what small, defenceless things women

were—when you understood them.

Much later, holding her hand very tightly, he said: "Goodbye, Miss Bickerstaffe. I'm glad to see the last of you. I shan't even give you a reference. And goodnight, Angela, my very darlingest."

She didn't answer, but her lips were soft and warm against his.

The annual Christmas party at Truogood & Nephew's was in full spate. Children ran and shouted; mothers stood in groups discussing the number of eggs they'd put in their Christmas cakes and what to do with the kids during the long holidays; the typists giggled and made eyes at their own and other people's boyfriends.

Mr. Perkey wandered about displaying a fat and drooling baby grandson. Miss Waddell and Miss Ollop were coy beneath hats bearing much flora and fauna. Mrs. Truogood beamed largely at everyone, and Mr. Truogood held court enthroned on a swivel-chair draped for the occasion with the firm's Union Jack.

Miss Bickerstaffe, in beige faille and a minute glittering hat, was so beautiful now that she smiled all the time, that she was handed more sandwiches than ten of her could possibly have eaten by a succession of fathers and brothers, each more goggle-eyed than the last.

And then, when not even the most persistent child could stuff itself with another cream cake, there was a thunderous hammering upon the door and in strode a most magnificent Father Christmas bowed beneath the weight of his bulging sack.

There were yells of joy from the children and subdued applause from the grown-ups. Father Christmas took up his position beside Mr. Truogood's chair, and Mr. Perkey still clasping the baby, marshalled the guests into a line, children first. The doling out of the presents began.

Miss Waddell and Miss Ollop, unwrapping their parcels, were pallid with excitement and emotion.

"She chose it!" whispered Miss Waddell. "The very thing I've always longed for. And I said horrible things about her!"

"Me, too," hissed back Miss Ollop. "How did she know? Oh, I feel terrible! I do wish we'd got something nicer for her!"

"Sh! Mr. Ralph's going to give it to her now."

"A Merry Christmas, Miss Bickerstaffe," Father Christmas was saying rather hoarsely. "Miss Bickerstaffe has only been with us a short while, but she has—made her presence felt in the office. I know you will all be sorry when I tell you that she will not be returning after the holidays—"

He handed the empty sack gravely to her and there were surprised titters and murmurs of astonishment.

"The sack!" Miss Waddell nudged Miss Ollop. "He's given her the sack!"

"Well, of all the mean things," began Miss Ollop belligerently, and stopped as Mr. Truogood held up his hand for silence.

"I have an announcement to make," said Mr. Truogood, his eyes very blue and twinkling. "As you have all seen, Miss Bickerstaffe has been given the sack by my nephew. Now I can announce their engagement. I am sure you will all join with my wife and I in wishing them the very happiest of futures—"

His voice was drowned in the raucous applause, none clapping more loudly than Miss Waddell and Miss Ollop. Applause gave way to laughter when it was seen that Father Christmas' make-up was not kiss-proof.

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THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY—December 30, 1953



1—HOT PORRIDGE makes a meal for peasant boys Steen (John Allen), Holger (Kay Davies), and their uncle, Bertel (Harry Geary), in a scene from the play "Why the Chimes Rang," presented by the Wollongong Workshop Theatre at Wollongong, N.S.W. Here Bertel has just arrived to take his nephews to a cathedral, where people are bringing gifts in the hope of pleasing the Christ Child and witnessing a miracle.

Amateur group in Miracle play

A Miracle play, performed just before Christmas at Wollongong, N.S.W., brought the atmosphere of the Middle Ages into a modern industrial city.

THE play, presented by an amateur group known as the Wollongong Workshop Theatre, was "Why the Chimes Rang," by Elizabeth A. McFadden.

The theme of the play deals with the value of self-sacrifice and thoughtfulness. The author imagined a number of

medieval pilgrims bringing rich gifts to a great cathedral and hoping that one of the gifts will invoke a sign of approval from Heaven.

Holger, son of a poor woodsman, can offer only two pennies, but, because the giving of the pennies involves a deep personal sacrifice, the coins are worth more in the eyes of Heaven than silver cups and ropes of pearls.

As soon as Holger offers the pennies the miracle happens.

Old and New Australian members of the Wollongong group worked together on stage and behind the scenes.

Young Italian migrant Gino Sanguinetti, who left his home in Genoa more than two years ago, painted the interior of the woodsman's hut and was responsible for the great "stained-glass windows" in the cathedral scene.

He managed to give the effect on canvas of glowing panes of glass. On the central window he painted a figure of Christ.

Australian schoolteacher Vincent Rees produced the play and was assisted by stage manager Ab Witmer, originally from Amsterdam, Holland.

Wide research went into the medieval costumes worn by members of the cast. Wardrobe mistress was Mrs. Enid Jeffcott, and Mrs. Pat Noske was property mistress.



2—THE KNIGHT (Doug Brown) brings his sword, the sage (Cecil Cooke) his book, the rich woman (Ina Drum) her pearls, the King (Con Klein-schmidt) his jewels, the Queen (Betty Johnston) a silver goblet. If one gift pleases the Christ Child, because of the self-sacrifice implied, miraculous bells will ring. Pictures on this page by staff photographer Bill Howarth.



4—HOLGER, still in the hut, sees in a vision the ceremony taking place at the cathedral (above). As in a dream, he moves forward to offer his richest gift—two pennies. They are his sole worldly possessions, yet he gives them freely to Almighty God.



3—THE PRIEST (Adrian O'Donnell) offers the gifts to God, while Holger stays in his hut caring for a frail old woman who sought shelter there. His brother and uncle are at the cathedral with the others.



5—INSTANTLY, miraculous bells ring out, the silvery sound floating over streets and snowy fields into Holger's poor hut (right). The old woman has vanished, and the boy stands alone by the open window—alone with his miracle. Worth more than any casket of precious jewels is the poor child's gift of twopence, and his innocent generous heart.

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SWIFTLY
AND SAFELY
KILLS FLIES



ST18-51



1. HOMECOOKED rissoles celebrate the third wedding anniversary of Maud (Celia Johnson) and Captain Henry St. James (Alec Guinness). Maud is tired of her humdrum existence at home.



2. RETURNING to Gibraltar after one of his trips to Morocco, Henry is startled to find that Maud has been indulging her yen for the romantic with a saucy stranger (Walter Grisham).

New Guinness comedy



3. ROMANTIC Moroccan companion, Nita (Yvonne de Carlo), further upsets Henry when she succumbs to a desire to become domesticated.

★ "The Captain's Paradise" (London Films) gives Alec Guinness his first romantic role. It is a hilarious story of a Merchant Navy captain who seeks paradise on earth in the love of two women — his wife, Maud, and Nita, a romantic Moroccan.

After several years of a successful double life, domestic with Maud and gay with Nita, the captain finds his plans going awry.

Lovely Yvonne de Carlo plays the romantic Nita, and Celia Johnson is Maud, the rebellious housewife.



4. SHOCK awaits Henry when Nita, too, prepares rissoles for their second anniversary dinner party.



5. SURPRISE VISIT to Morocco by Maud nearly uncovers Henry's double life when Nita, unaware of Maud's identity, helps her bargain in the bazaar. Henry escapes by having Maud detained by a friendly policeman.



6. WORRIED by Maud's desire to go gay and by Nita's wish to become domesticated, Henry seeks solace over a bottle of whisky with his first mate.



7. HORRIFIED when he and friends (Nicholas Phipps and Ambrosine Phillpotts) see Maud let her hair down and jitterbug with gay abandon in public, Henry feels the situation is out of hand.



8. DRIVEN by domestic chaos, Henry disappears. He finds his earthly paradise when he plays golf at a desert oasis—complete with dancing girls — owned by a friendly sheik.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY — December 30, 1953

Scots boy is sensation of British films

All Britain is hailing a new child star. The public is queuing for blocks along London's Haymarket to see him in his first film, "The Kidnappers."

HE is Vincent Winter, a little Scots boy only five years old. He was discovered in an Aberdeen kindergarten where he has only just started school, and the critics are yelling that here is the greatest child discovery since Shirley Temple — and certainly the most adorable child star Britain has ever produced.

His discovery is so much more of a sensation because, until his chubby mischief burst upon the screen this week in "The Kidnappers," nobody had the slightest inkling that a new child star was being

coaxed through his lines in his first picture at Pinewood.

But behind the scenes in the studio and in the offices of the Rank Organisation, a furious yet secret hubbub has been going on for more than six months, culminating in the finding of Vincent and the revealing of a talent before the cameras as his first film rolled under way that the director hadn't dared hope for in his most ecstatic dreams.

Credit for little Vincent Winter's discovery goes largely to a woman talent scout of the Rank Organisation, Margaret Thomson, who was set the job of finding a suitable boy to play the younger of two orphans in a screen play of the harsh life

in a primitive community in Nova Scotia 50 years ago.

Margaret Thomson was given a tough brief. She was to scour Scotland to find a boy of about five who combined toughness with winsomeness and poignant appeal, who didn't have too strong an accent, who could be relied on to be completely natural in any circumstances, and who could act.

The search took her and her associates through schools all over Scotland and involved interviews with 3000 boys. Finally they assembled and whittled their choice down to 25.

They were brought down—a motley assortment of boys from the best homes and the humblest—for a final seeding-out at Pinewood. Lined up with all the others, shifting from one foot to the other while he waited his turn, was the blond and bright-eyed little Vincent Winter. He got bored. Finally he broke ranks and made for the door.

"This is taking too long," he announced. "I'll be back—but I just have to leave the room." His first comment on the film business has since been quoted with delight up and down the country. His perky spontaneity and air of independence clinched his selection for the part; when his turn came to go before the cameras Vincent romped away with his screen test.

He comes from a humble home in a council block of

From
BILL STRUTTON
in London

flats in Aberdeen. His father, Jeffery Winter, is a burly Welsh-born seaman serving on a collier which plies between Aberdeen and Sunderland. News that their child had been chosen for stardom came like a bombshell into their home. When his father came home from his boat and was met with the news at the door, he pushed his cap back, scratched his head, stared at his plump Scots wife, Dorothy, and said, "Ye haven't been dreaming, have ye?"

Vincent's elder brother and sister were overawed. They were used enough to being twisted round young Vincent's little finger, but the fact that he had performed this feat with a whole film studio was something even they couldn't believe.

Now, judging from his London reception, he is set to do this with millions. In his first role he is on the screen practically the whole of the time, and the verdict is that he has not merely stolen scenes from the rest of the cast, but plundered the whole film.

The film, "The Kidnappers," is a sort of latter-day "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and according to the nose-blowing, tear-mopping reception it had before a sophisticated London audience, who finally burst into loud cheering for this five-year-old boy at the end, it seems assured of a triumphant and emotional progress round the world.

In it Vincent is one of two children (the other is boy star Jon Whiteley, now 8), who

are left orphans after the Boer War and come to live with their stern grandfather on a poor farm in Nova Scotia.

It's a harsh and lonely life for them, bereft of tenderness and affection. Their grandfather refuses to allow them even to keep a pet dog on which to lavish their yearning affection. He asks, "What use is a dog to you? You can't eat a dog, can you?" It is a bitter commentary on their rough and poverty-stricken existence.

When the boys find a baby abandoned in the woods, they adopt it, hide it, and care for it in secret. The old man discovers the baby and carries it away. The most heart-rending cry in the film comes from the tiny Vincent, who runs after him, crying in terror, "You mustn't eat it, Granddad! You mustn't eat it!" The pathos and terror of the children and of the whole film is distilled into this climactic scene.

When "The Kidnappers" had been cut and edited the studio hauled Vincent out of his kindergarten, dressed him in a tartan kilt, and brought him with his mother and his sailor-father down to London for the premiere. Both his parents were trembly and a little scared at being whisked into the centre spotlight of a glittering film first night.

But Vincent Winter declared, "I'm not scared!" He wasn't. It's all tremendous fun to him. He climbed up and down restlessly in his cinema seat and chuckled at the sight of himself up there on the screen.

To him, all his new-found film friends are either "Uncle" or "Auntie." Except, perhaps, the new feminine star Adrienne Corri (of "The River"), from whose debut in a starring role as a quite talented newcomer he has, with the merciless uncon-



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CHARM BOYS from Aberdeen, Vincent Winter, aged 5, and eight-year-old Jon Whiteley, arrive in London to see themselves play the title roles in the new British film "The Kidnappers."

sciousness of a child, stolen so much thunder. He has already confided to several folk on the studio floor that he loves Adrienne.

And Adrienne, far from resenting standing in the shade of his performance, confesses with a smile, "I hope he's not kidding me along!"

The studio Press agent's idea of dressing little Vincent up for the premiere in a kilt, a frilly collar, and sundry other Scottish whatnots to go with his delightful Aberdeen accent did not come off quite as expected.

For with innocent honesty Vincent confessed to the assembled Press, including a lot of lady columnists who were down on their knees around him, "I don't know what tartan I'm wearing. I've never worn one before. The film people made me wear this one."

Despite their humble background and the dazzling future now opening before their son—for already the phone is ringing with new starring offers—Vincent's parents are showing sense in deciding on his future. Said Mrs. Dorothy Winter, simply: "I would like him to be famous. But I have turned down offers for another film because I feel he needs a long rest after this one. "If he is good enough, there's plenty of time. I would like Vincent to make a career in films."

His grey-haired granny, also wife of an Aberdeen fisherman, was a little sadder. She said, "I suppose this means that little Vincent will become famous. If he does I know he will never become spoilt."

"But I think his mummy, daddy and I will have lost our little boy."



CHEEKY APPEAL of tiny Vincent Winter (left) comes out in the film as he gives the glad-eye to Adrienne Corri, whom he confesses privately that he loves.

★★ Kiss Me Kate

PEOPLE who appreciated the stage production of "Kiss Me Kate," which had a long run in Australia last year, will enjoy Metro's Anasco Color version of the musical.

It is patterned on lavish lines and photographed in the 3-dimension process which requires the audience to wear polaroid spectacles.

"Kate" provides the best 3-D seen to date. In places

Talking of Films

By M. J. McMAHON

where 3-D facilities are not available, Metro proposes to show the film flat.

"Kiss Me Kate" is a frothy play-within-a-play in which, to the tune of some top-Cole Porter songs, an egotistical Broadway star (Howard Keel) and his divorced actress wife (Kathryn Grayson) carry temperamental outbursts on to the stage during their theatrical performance in

Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew."

Howard Keel puts tons of romantic appeal into his playing of devil-may-care Petruchio. His acting is easier than that of Kathryn Grayson, his voice is robust and warm, and he cuts a handsome figure wearing a neat beard and colorful costumes of the character.

Grayson's militance is over-

CITY FILM GUIDE

Films reviewed

CENTURY.—★★ "The Moon is Blue," comedy, starring Maegie McNamara, William Holden, David Niven. Plus featurettes.

ESQUIRE.—★★ "Belles de Nuit," French-language comedy, starring Gerard Philipe, Gina Lollobrigida, Martine Carol. Plus ★ "Thy Neighbor's Wife," drama, starring Hugo Haas, Cleo Moore.

LIBERTY.—★★ "Kiss Me Kate," Anasco Color musical, starring Howard Keel, Kathryn Grayson. (See review this page.) Plus featurettes.

LYRIC.—★★ "Give a Girl a Break," technicolor musical, starring Marge and Gower Champion, Debbie Reynolds. Plus ★ "Remains To Be Seen," comedy-mystery, starring Van Johnson, June Allyson. (Both re-releases.)

MAYFAIR AND PARK.—★★ "Peter Pan," Walt Disney's full-length technicolor cartoon. Plus "Water Birds," technicolor nature feature.

PLAZA.—★★ "White Witch Doctor," technicolor jungle drama, starring Susan Hayward, Robert Mitchum. Plus "Overland Telegraph," a Tim Holt Western.

REGENT.—★★ "The Robe," CinemaScope biblical drama in technicolor, starring Richard Burton, Jean Simmons, Victor Mature, Michael Rennie.

SAVOY.—★★★ "One Summer of Happiness," Swedish-language drama, starring Ulla Jacobsson, Folke Sundquist. Plus ★★ "Ukrainian Concert Hall," color music feature.

STATE.—★★★ "From Here to Eternity," drama, starring Burt Lancaster, Montgomery Clift, Frank Sinatra, Deborah Kerr, Donna Reed. Plus featurettes.

ST. JAMES.—★★ "Mogambo," technicolor outdoor drama, starring Clark Gable, Ava Gardner, Grace Kelly, Donald Sinden.

Films not reviewed

CIVIC.—"The System," crime drama, starring Frank Lovejoy, Joan Weldon, Paul Picerni. Plus ★ "Torrid Zone," drama, starring James Cagney, Ann Sheridan, Pat O'Brien. (Re-release.)

EMBASSY.—"The Beggar's Opera," technicolor musical fantasy, starring Sir Laurence Olivier, Dorothy Tutin. Plus featurettes.

ESQUIRE.—"Inferno," technicolor outdoor drama, starring Robert Ryan, Rhonda Fleming, William Lundigan. Plus "Mantrap," mystery, starring Lloyd Corrigan, Dorothy Lovett.

PALACE.—"Abbott and Costello Meet Captain Kidd," technicolor comedy, starring Budd Abbott, Lou Costello, Charles Laughlin. Plus cartoons during day sessions. "One Sunday Afternoon," starring Dennis Morgan, at night.

PRINCE EDWARD.—"Road to Bali," technicolor musical comedy, starring Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Dorothy Lamour. Plus featurettes.

matter what they did, but David MacArd and her own daughter certainly did not have to be missionaries. Old Mr. MacArd was right. Olivia had told her angrily of that scene, but when she got back to New York she would write him a letter and tell him he was right. India was a horrid country.

When she squeezed her sponge in the bath this morning a centipede ran out, and she had nearly fainted, although luckily the dangerous insect had dropped from her right shoulder to the floor without stinging her and had disappeared down the drain. She mumbled rebellion in her heart until suddenly the little ocean was playing again joyfully and David and Olivia moved together to walk down the aisle and she had to walk behind them.

A week from now, maybe only a couple of days from now, she would be on a ship and going back to a Christian country.

"Poor Mamma," Olivia said suddenly. They had been married four days.

"Why?" David inquired, not caring.

"All this," Olivia said, her hand sweeping the panorama of the hills around Poona. "I do really wish she could have seen it. Now she will never believe that India isn't what she thinks it is."

"Much of it is," David observed.

"Yes, but there's this," Olivia insisted. She was happy, utterly, wholly happy, she was in love, she had been so afraid that she could not be, but now she was in love with this strange man, her husband.

When she remembered the slender boy who had once thrown himself at her feet and whom she had swiftly rejected because he had been so childish, so fond, so silly, she could not believe that he had become this calm, quietly arrogant man who told her plainly when he wanted to be alone, who withdrew morning and evening for his private prayers, who was absolute in his determination to be his own master and whom therefore she could worship.

She subdued herself to him, delighting in subjection. She obeyed him, astonished that she enjoyed obedience. She had been alone so long, and so long had she been wilful and her mother helpless before her that it was exciting to understand that while David did love her with beautiful passion she was not to be his whole life. She was his beloved, that she knew, but love was not everything to this man.

What was beyond she did not know, and her imagination stirred. She liked even the beard, for that boy long ago had had a profile marred perhaps by the delicate chin. The delicacy in eyelid and nostril still remained, but his mouth was firm and the chin was hidden.

Continuing . . . Come, My Beloved

from page 5

"Oh, I love you," she cried, suddenly ardent.

They were sitting on a verandah, from whence the mountains rolled away into the horizon, falling so steeply from the house that the tops of the trees brushed the railing.

She dropped to her knees before him, and he saw unexpected worship in her eyes. This was Olivia, astonishing him with her love, a woman who might easily never have loved him but who by some grace of God did now love him utterly. He knew that she loved altogether or not at all, that was his Olivia, and, if he trembled sometimes before her ardor, he was reassured.

Had she not given herself completely, he might have found it impossible to refrain from pursuit, and in that pursuit he might have put even God aside. But now she was securely his, there need be no pursuit, and he was free. He loved her with passion but not sinfully, because she did not consume him. The centre of his heart was calm, and there God dwelled and not Olivia. He felt that all was right, that the balance was maintained.

"Thank God, you do love me," he said, gazing down into the dark, worshipping eyes.

"And why thank God?" she demanded.

"Because otherwise I might have destroyed myself. I might have lost my soul."

She did not understand what he meant, but she listened. It did not occur to her that she had a rival, or that her place had already been set. She was second and not first, she was his heart but not his soul, but she did not know the difference.

"Take me in your arms," she whispered.

He took her in his arms, safe in the soft Indian night. It was dark, the swift twilight was gone, and the dense black line of the mountains could scarcely be seen against the sky, except that at the horizon the stars shone. Happiness flowed between the man and the woman, and for her it was enough. It was everything. But for him it was human, and, though sweet, it was contentment, not more.

For him the divine miracle was not here upon the earth, not even in his arms. He held her close, but his eyes searched the sky, beyond the stars. He was committed to God, he knew it now, and he felt secure.

To her surprise, Olivia liked India, or perhaps her particular bit of India. In the morning the well-trained servants brought her tea and toast. Today she lay in bed and waited for the noiseless footsteps and the feigned sleep.

"Memsahib!"

She heard the apologetic whisper and opened her eyes upon the fragile figure of the boy, a dark-skinned, half-grown man, the son of the cook. He set the tray on the table.

"Thank you," she said sleepily.

He stole away upon bare feet and she bestirred herself indolently and alone. An hour earlier David had left the enormous bed. The coolness of the morning held the best hours for his study and prayer. She got out of bed and examined her shippers lest some homing, noxious insect had sheltered there in the night. They were safe and she drew them on.

The sun had risen perhaps half an hour ago, but the room was already hot. She combed back her hair and braided it freshly, and, going into the bathroom, she brushed her teeth from the carafe of boiled water. All water taken into the mouth must be boiled, that she had learned. Then she took off her muslin nightgown and poured water over herself from the jar of tepid water. It ran down her slender body to the tiled floor which sloped to a drain.

She liked this sort of bath, it was quick and refreshing, and she dried herself on a soft towel and drew on a chemise. She had already learned to dress for comfort. Mrs. Fordham wore corsets, but Olivia had put hers away into the trunk of garments that she had

sionary. This is not within my power."

Still, Olivia tried at times to please the stout Christians. She was fond of Mrs. Fordham in an easy way, and she liked Mr. Fordham warmly. They were good. But it did seem a waste for them to spend so much time on poor and low-caste people and why, she asked David, when there were Indians like Darya, did not he and the Fordhams make them into Christians?

Even Mr. and Mrs. Fordham had cast longing looks from afar at the proud and wealthy young Indian.

"If you could only win him for Christ," they said wistfully to David.

But Darya evaded Christ with his usual careless and half-humorous grace.

"One's religion is as personal as one's marriage," he declared. "I would not dream, dear David, of persuading you of my Hindu faith, and you, my friend, are too delicately attuned to me to try to change me. Is it not so with us?"

Who could deny such charm? Olivia felt it as de-

Olivia did not try to grow flowers, but the servants found green branches and blossoms strange to her, or sometimes only huge fern leaves and small palms. She drifted across the big bare rooms for which she had never bought furniture, after all in Bombay. She had not wanted to buy for a house she had not yet seen and so they had come straight to Poona, and she had left the house as it was.

The few pieces of furniture of exquisite workmanship, some Chinese tables and cabinets, and Indian brocades thrown across their dark and shining surfaces were enough. She had not hung curtains in the heat, the jealousies were enough, too, and she did not like paintings on the walls. She was contemptuous of the English interiors, rooms as stuffy as any in London, and even less did she like the inexpensive but similar effects that Mrs. Fordham made with rattan and wicker. No cushions, not in this heat, and the insects lurking!

"The house is a bit bare though, dearie," Mrs. Fordham said.

"I like bareness," Olivia said.

She went to find David without much hope, for at this hour he might be anywhere, sitting with some thoughtful visitor or working with the architect on his boundless plans for a vast school.

He took his own way as ruthlessly as his father did for purposes entirely different, and she knew that he planned an enormous compound, a centre of education and health and religion. Some day this centre would be known all over India, thanks to the MacArd millions. What, she often wondered, would David have been as the son of a poor man?

She found him in his study at the huge table he had ordered made for his plans. A young Anglo-Indian architect was with him and they were earnestly poring over the plans for another dormitory, an addition to the proposed college for men.

The Anglo-Indian saw her first. He was a slender, graceful young man, his olive skin, his blue-brown eyes, his straight hair dark but not black, revealing his mixed race. He was English, and his presence passionately proclaimed him the son of an English father. He had purposely forgotten his mother, whose inherited features he had, for she was Indian.

"Good morning, Mrs. MacArd," he exclaimed with his slight exaggeration of Oxford accent, the little extravagance of manner which revealed his Indian blood. "I have been so hoping you would come in, you know, you have such an extraordinary sense of design, such a quick eye for balance, it's always such a relief to be shown one's faults but so delightfully."

Olivia smiled and put out her hand, aware of looking charming in her soft white muslin frock. India had made her feminine, she had relaxed, her lips were no longer taut or her body tense. But that perhaps was partly marriage and the certainty at last that she could and did love the man to whom she was married.

Religion, dedication, whatever one wanted to call it, had made David strong and dominant, and love had taught her the joy of submission. In her way she supposed she had longed to submit and now she could submit without loss of herself. The young Anglo-Indian's eyes were unpleasantly moist as he gazed at her and she withdrew her hand.

"Good morning, Olivia," David said. He was careful to show no marital fondness before Indians or Anglo-Indians, who were always, he thought, more Indian than English.



decided would never do for India. A chemise and a petticoat and then her muslin dress, bare feet in sandals, because her skirts were long, and while she dressed she sipped the strong Indian tea and nibbled dry toast.

No butter—the butter came in tin cans from Australia and it was a soft yellow oil by the time one opened the can. She would have none of it, not even in the vegetables. But the dry toast, the dark, almost bitter, tea with condensed milk and lumpy sugar, were good food after a hot night. She would not eat again until noon, they had English tea at four and did not dine until dark. One needed to eat often but never much in this climate.

She left the room as it was, her garments thrown where she had taken them off. There were servants enough, some paid, some unpaid except for eating the scraps from the kitchen, and she never asked how many there were. Mrs. Fordham might not approve of her, Mrs. Fordham who had to live rigorously on a missionary's salary, but Olivia did not care.

Old Mr. MacArd put the cheques unannounced into her private account in an English bank in Bombay. She found it pleasant, after all, and David asked no questions. He let her do as she liked, and when Mrs. Fordham suggested one day that she was not a proper missionary he had agreed.

"I asked Olivia to be my wife." He had learned to be very firm with the Fordhams. "I didn't ask her to be a mis-

licious as ever, and it must not be distrusted.

"Do leave Darya his own religion," she had then told David, to which he had made no reply.

Meanwhile she had not yet met Leilamani, nor even had more than a glimpse of Darya and the exchange of greetings and a few questions. He had seemed almost shy in her presence.

"After you are settled and after your honeymoon," he said, "when you are quite at home here in Poona I will invite you to my house, and you shall meet Leilamani."

He had not yet invited them, and when only yesterday she had wondered aloud at the delay, David had said, "Darya always does exactly as he pleases, Olivia. You'll have to wait."

His manner was remote, his voice firm, and a glance showed her that he was the other David, the missionary and not the lover. But she was too happy to be wounded, content perhaps being the more exact word for her state of mind, for content was large and all embracing, and happiness was sharp and particular and must be reserved for special moments.

She finished her tea and toast and wandered out of her room. In the house the shades were drawn against the sun and the house was shadowy, if not with coolness at least with its semblance. The bare floors were polished, the furniture dustless, and a servant had filled the vases with fresh flowers.

"Sit down and give us your advice, as Ramsay suggests. I'll just outline my idea first. I want a vast quadrangle here," he put his finger upon a space, "centred upon a fountain, something really beautiful. I want to tempt young men to come here."

"And when you have caught them in your net?" she asked, leaning over him.

"Once they are here I shall assault their souls," he declared with vigor. "I shall not, for example, give them any excuse for caste."

Ramsay shook his head doubtfully and pulled at a minute black moustache.

"There will be trouble. These people are all for caste, you know, Mr. MacArd. And the Marathi are a very strong people, very forceful and all that. They will be as liberal as you please and then suddenly they're frightfully superstitious. Look at the present cult of that dreadful old woman, the sect of Baba Jan! Actually, sir, there are well-educated Indian Indians among her followers. It's disgusting."

The dreadful old woman was a half-witted beggar who wandered about Poona. People said she was a hundred and fifty years old and that she could raise the dead to life again.

It was true that there were young Indians, even some educated in Oxford and Cambridge, who believed or half believed in her, just as Darya, laughing but still troubled, had fetched a swami to exorcise his house when the servants were terrified because they said an evil spirit was caught in the lofty rafters.

"It's all nonsense about the Indians being spiritual, of course," Ramsay went on with the bravado, the pitiful contempt of the man who fears that in his ancestry there is concealed shame. "Indians aren't spiritual—they're merely superstitious. And lots of them don't believe in any gods at all nowadays. I know a chap, a very rich chap, too, who has had it carved above his gate, 'God is nowhere.'"

David listened in his usual intent fashion. "Perhaps it is best for the false gods to be cast out, so that the spirit of the true God may enter," he observed.

"Oh, the old yogis won't let that happen," Ramsay exclaimed with strange passion. "They pretend to be so saintly, but they are very wicked and cruel, actually."

"That depends upon the nature of the man," David replied. "There are yogis who are so kind, so winning, so good that I fear them because they resemble Christ. They are our real enemies. The Marathi post-natal said—'you remember Tukaram? I was reading his poems the other day.'"

"On all alike he mercy shows, On all an equal love bestows."

"That's the man I fear, a saint who does not acknowledge Christ. The cruel, harsh, self-sufficient yogis—ah, I don't fear them! Human hearts turn to love as plants to the sun. Lead us from the darkness into light—that's from the Hindu Scriptures, too, and desire is still passionate in the hearts of these people. But I want to show them the true light."

He was preaching and he knew it, but Ramsay and Olivia listened, compelled by his strong sincerity. She marvelled at the attractive power in this man whom she now loved. Where had it come from except from the inner source of his own faith?

She was Christian, she supposed, but not as he was. Her religion was not a force so much as an atmosphere in which she lived, and in the atmosphere there were many

To page 36

FOR THE CHILDREN

Wuff, Snuff & Tuff

by TIM



Social Polish

Is the Australian teenager cruder, more naive, less sophisticated than the average European boy or girl?

THIS is the question implied by a reader in a long and interesting letter.

She begins by taking me to task for having said that true sophistication isn't possible in anyone young.

She hasn't entirely persuaded me. And the central point made in that article—that too many teenagers think flossy manners and highbrow pretensions mean sophistication—still remains.

But here is the reader's point of view. She says:

"I believe that the appearance of most people is a true indication of how close they come to being civilised—and sophisticated."

"No one can convince me that as long as a woman is able to hold the eye of another woman by her poise, or the eye of a man because of her looks, she will ever be willing to shrug and say: 'I shall slouch around in jeans'; or 'I am in too much of a hurry to bother how I look, or walk, or behave.'"

"Sophistication in Australian everyday life may be out of place, but abroad it is the axle on which society's wheels turn."

"The worship of the wide-open-spaces personality of the Australian in Australia is fine. But abroad I have seen Australians who hated being away from Australia because their way of living didn't fit them for living in any other country."

"This was their loss, and a loss to the people who were thus unable to meet them on any level."

"Sophistication would have helped them to keep the best of Australian life and yet meet others on common ground."

"When I was in Vancouver, Canada, some years ago, I was asked by friends to meet a cousin who was to make my friends' home his headquarters on his arrival in Canada from here."

"This cousin was a man of good family, was intelligent, had a good education, but he

lacked even the superficial polish which would have been an advantage.

"My friends never commented on their inability to understand how any man could go through life without realising that there are certain courtesies expected of him."

"In one instance I noticed this man rise at the same time as his hostess. He saw she was going toward a door leading to a passage. He was not more than six feet away from the door and you would have expected him to open the door for his hostess. But, no."

"Thank goodness the 12-year-old daughter of the house ran to the door and opened

in her approach and that of her French playmates.

She writes:

"These French children really seemed to fit into adult company, to listen to adult conversation, and to translate everything they had observed into their own idiom and for their own use."

This attitude, she discovered when meeting the children years later, made them in their teens almost as poised in meeting worldly situations as their elders.

Now, this is one reader's opinion. I, for one, agree with it in the main.

For instance, her point about good manners. Manners are an asset to anyone, but Australian girls and boys tend to divide into sheep and goats about them.

The sheep section (boys particularly) baaa that good manners are "sissy"; the goat section (girls particularly) bleat that social polish is all.

As to whether foreign boys and girls are more sophisticated:

Judging by local evidences, most New Australians are wiser, more poised, and older for their age. ("Most New Australians" automatically excludes the bodge element.)

The circumstances of their lives have given them many more adult experiences than befall most Australian boys and girls. As a result they have had to grow up fast.

Besides, Europe has less space to offer an individual than Australia, and as a result children have to accommodate themselves to adults' ways rather than being able to run wild in the nearest paddock.

You might think that this lack of "living room" is too high a price to pay for sophistication.

You might say: If sophistication means being damped down when you're a kid, and being sadder, older, and wiser before you reach 20, I'll settle for as much open-mouthed wonder as I feel like.

A bachelor's opinion:

DOES A MAN LIKE BEING OWNED?

OF course he does. He just thrives on being made feel the most important thing in somebody's life.

But then it can go too far.

When the "moon madness" wears off and the serious business of day-to-day living begins, it may become very trying.

Especially if he's been brow-beaten into giving up his sports, his friends, and his social activities in favor of the homely hearth.

Then perhaps he'll begin to think private ownership isn't such a good thing.

it for her mother before her mother reached it.

"The stunned silence which followed this exit among the members of the family did make the cousin realise his mistake."

"I am always reminding my children about their lack of manners. To this they reply: 'No one does that at school.' But I refuse to let their manners remain at such a low level."

"I also want them to be able to face unforeseen occurrences outside home without bewilderment or too much curiosity."

"The unsophisticated are too prone to open-mouthed wonder, which is unattractive and unnecessary."

The reader explains that when she spent part of her childhood in France she was astounded by the difference

TEN-YEAR-OLD harmonica

player Gene Jimae, now completing his professional stage appearances in Australia, made his debut at the age of five alongside Paul Whiteman. In the ensuing years he has really reached big-time standards, as you will hear if you listen to two locally made records (DO3602/3) backed with an orchestra under the direction of Bob Gibson. "Stomp A La Turk" (a hot-d-up version of Mozart's "Turkish March") is coupled with "Bluegene's Boogie," while "Riders In The Sky" has "Novellette" for a platter-mate. "Boogie" and "Novellette" were composed by the lad, and both discs are most entertaining.

DISC DIGEST

ON DO3601 Gibson's own outfit couples two big overseas hits, "Wild Horses," a tune with terrific drive and fresh lyrics, and "My One And Only Heart," a first-rate dance number. The local boys show that they can hold their own with any imported material.

★ ★ ★
CREPE-PAPER shamrocks are well in evidence as Crosby sings "With My Shillelagh Under My Arm" on DO70053. Nor does he try very hard by donning blue jeans for the flip, "Country Style," which is a vocal square dance with a bewildering variety of calls.

ELLEN SUTTON, who

combines the exuberance of Merman with the leather-lungs of Bessie Smith, wins me for keeps with her rough-house rendition of "You Can't Buffalo Me" on Y6504. It recreates brilliantly the atmosphere of a beery vaudeville show, complete with whistles, applause, and shouted encores. Reverse is her equally rowdy waxing of the old 1919 hit "How Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down On 'The Farm,'" by Walter Donaldson, who composed "Mammy." Ragtime pianist Sir Hubert Pimm and His Aeolians capture the period with deliberately corny attack. The disc should be labelled "Unsuitable for musical snobs."

—BERNARD FLETCHER.

DRESS SENSE

by Betty Keep



The questions and answers below deal with fashion problems chosen from letters received this week from readers seeking advice.

HERE is a letter in which a reader has asked me to suggest a pattern for a full-skirted cotton.

"I WANT to make myself a full-skirted frock in blue-and-white-striped cotton, and I can't find a pattern for a style I really like. I want the frock to have some sort of very full skirt and a bodice finished with a white collar and matching cuffs. Would it be possible to obtain a paper pattern from 'Dress Sense,' something really snappy? I am tall, 5ft. 5 1/2 in., and my bust measurement is 34 in."

Above is a design for your striped cotton which I think is unusual and very pretty. The bodice top is front buttoned and finished with a white pique collar and matching cuffs; the full skirt is styled with two self ruffles. A paper pattern for the design is obtainable in sizes 32 in. to 38 in. bust. See further details in caption above right.

"I AM converting a black tulle evening frock into a ballerina-length skirt and would like an idea for a colored trimming. The skirt is fitted over the hips and widens out at the hem."

Ribbon is very new used as a trim, and I think it would be an excellent idea for your skirt. Choose turquoise or bright pink for the color, and use a good, firm type of ribbon, such as grosgrain. Circle the waist of the skirt with a length of ribbon and finish with a neat, flat bow at the

centre front. Take two other lengths of the same ribbon, stitch one around the hipline and the other above the knees. If you feel a third circle is necessary, stitch it just above hem level.

"WOULD it be suitable for a bridesmaid to wear the same material as the bride? The bride has chosen white velvet, and the bridesmaid, who is dark with hazel eyes, fancies green. When answering my letter would you please suggest a suitable color and style for the bridesmaid's headdress?"

It is perfectly correct for a bride and her attendant to wear dresses made of the same material. Choose a very dark green for the bridesmaid's dress, because it is newer than a lighter tone. For the bridesmaid's headdress I suggest tangerine velvet, flattering to a brunette and an important new color. Have the head-dress made in velvet leaves extending across the head from one ear to the other and worn well back from the hairline.

"WOULD you give me an idea of how I could combine two pieces of material to make a ballerina frock? I have 2 1/2 yds. of fine lace and 7 yds. of organza. I am thin, with a long neck, so I don't want a bare top to the bodice."

My suggestion for your ballerina dress is a bodice top in lace and a skirt in organza. Have the bodice beltless, curved into the waistline, and extending to the hipline. Have the bodice high to the throat

DS67. — One-piece dress in sizes 32 in. to 38 in. bust. Requires 6 1/2 yds. 36 in. striped material and 1 yd. 36 in. contrast. Price 3/6. Patterns may be obtained from Mrs. Betty Keep, Dress Sense, Box 4088, G.P.O., Sydney.

and finished with a turtle neckline and tiny sleeves. The former looks very new in lightweight fabric. Complete the design with an all-round narrowly pleated skirt.

"I AM writing on behalf of a group of girls working in a factory who would like to know your opinion on the shorter skirtline, and what length you consider correct for day wear."

I don't like any really extreme fashion, and some of Dior's dresses with skirts just covering the knees-cap are, I think, just plain ugly. However, the trend to a shorter skirtline is already established, and most women, particularly those with good legs, will shorten their skirts several inches. A good average length is 14 1/2 in., which can be varied a little according to the wearer's height. A woman on the tall side can wear a shorter, skirtline than can a small woman.

Perhaps an easier way to find the correct and most becoming length is to consider where a skirt "hits" the wearer's leg—mid-calf or slightly above will be right for the average Australian.

"WOULD you suggest a color scheme for a cotton frock and contrasting colored cotton coat?"

My suggestion for your ensemble is a white linen coat lined with a rose printed cotton and a cotton dress to match the lining.

Continuing . . . Come, My Beloved

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her increasing interest in her pleasure in her ship with English people. She, her pity for the massive poverty she saw everywhere, her delight in the hills where she and David went for brief holidays, her amused affection for the Fordhams and the other missionaries like them before whom she walked carefully because she had benefits which they could not share—poor little Miss Parker, for example, the evangelist, so snub-nosed and stubby, who must look upon the marriage of the two young MacArds as something too close to heaven for her own comfort.

Oh, she, Olivia, was rich in many benefits, and so she must be humble.

"What is this scrawl?" she asked, putting her finger on a corner of the blue-print, but really she asked that she might lean against David's shoulder.

"I want Ramsay to design a women's dormitory there," he said.

Ramsay broke in with his too impetuous voice. "I don't like to criticise, I'm sure, but that, I feel, is really going too fast, Mr. MacArd. I cannot see the Indians willing to let their girls enter a compound where there are male students."

David was decisive. "If I am to cope with the new Ramkrishna revival of Hinduism, I must dare to break down old customs. The Ramkrishna people are perfectly aware of the dangers of the old Sannyasa ideas, which taught that men should be indifferent to the sorrows of the world, because all was illusion, anyway. Ramkrishna believes that God takes innumerable forms and colors, appearing everywhere."

He continued forcefully, "It's a tempting idea in these times of rising nationalism. 'Be gods and make gods'—I've heard them say that myself. They will revive Hinduism with such slogans, and that is what I must oppose, for India would be taken out of the modern world for centuries. It's the women who cling to the superstitions and it's the women I mean to educate as the men are educated."

Ramsay sneered slightly behind his little moustache. "If you are afraid of the new gods, why not be afraid of nationalism? That's where the old religious force is really being drained off."

"I am not afraid of nationalism," David argued. "I am afraid of something much greater than nationalism might misuse—the force of the masses of these people, and people like them anywhere in the world, men and women who cannot read or write, the peasants, the ones down under, that man who in India goes out to plough his miserable field with no better plough than his ancestors had a thousand years ago, he half starved as they were, while his wife stays home, subject, as women were in ancient times, to the three crooked things, the quern, the mortar, and her crook-backed lord."

"Oh, you two," Olivia murmured. "Where will you agree?"

Ramsay laughed. "Fortunately we need not agree. It is impossible to agree about India, you know. Two Indians, even, can never get together anywhere. They argue all over the place. But I am only an English architect, and so no one minds me. I am very ill-informed about India, actually. Most of my life has been spent in England."

He said this carelessly, not looking at them but preparing to roll up the great sheets of blue-prints, tapping the ends with his narrow hands, the strange dark hands, much darker than his face and so obviously Indian.

"Well, good day, sir, and madam," he said. "I'm glad you approved the fountain, Mr. MacArd, sir."

He bowed a trifle too deeply for an Englishman and went away.

"Poor fellow," Olivia said. "He tries so hard to be English."

"Foolish of him," David said. "It only makes the Indians hate him because they know he isn't English."

"Oh, let him be what he wants to be," Olivia said robustly.

She lingered, too proud to ask for his morning kiss and then he remembered.

He rose, smiled, and held out his arms and she came into them. These first months of marriage were dangerously sweet, almost too precious. They were both passionate and they had found in themselves needs, desires, responses of which they had never dreamed.

He held her in a long, close embrace, his lips to hers. Olivia drew away at last, breathless, sighing, and laid her head upon his shoulder.

At this moment they heard a cough at the door. They sprang apart, and Olivia muttered under her breath.

"How do they always seem to know?"

The interruption was innocent, the half-grown boy servant brought in a letter upon a small brass tray and David took it.

"From Darya," he said, smiling. "I think it is your invitation."

It was, and they were invited to come to the evening meal that day, entirely Indian, and Leilamani awaited Olivia, while Darya was their loving brother and friend.

Darya was at the door to greet them and Olivia saw at once that tonight he was all Indian. It was more than dress, though the rich Indian garments and the turban of brocade wound about his head enhanced his always unusual beauty. The static poise of his tall figure standing in the carved doorway, the remoteness of his large dark eyes, the dignity of the noble head made him Indian and strange.

He put his palms together in the graceful gesture of his people, the symbol, as he had once told her, of their recognition of the divine in every human creature, but tonight the gesture made him seem far off. She felt shy and ill at ease, and tried not to show what she felt, and failed. For once Darya did not help her.

"Come in," he said gravely. "Welcome to my house."

He led them into a large formal room hung with broad, faded, On the floor soft thick rugs were spread under cushions, and he invited them to be seated, and he sat down near them and clapped his hands. Servants came in with trays of fruit juices and honeyed water and sweetmeats, and they set the trays before David and Olivia but not before Darya. He spoke to a servant in a low voice and then motioned to his guests to eat.

David obeyed, quite at ease, Olivia was surprised to see, and she followed his example. She had never tasted such food before and she found it delicious—small tarts, hot marble-sized balls of vegetable paste, highly seasoned, honey cakes, delicate as rose petals, arranged gracefully upon fresh green leaves.

"This is all for your education, Olivia," David said after a few moments. "I have never been shown such honor before."

He glanced at Darya with rapid, amused eyes, to which Darya responded with a sudden burst of laughter. He removed the turban from his head, set it on the floor beside him, and took a tartlet from David's tray.

"It is quite authentic," he declared. "If you were an In-

dian lady, Olivia—and a modern one, for if you were old-fashioned we could not meet at all—you would be received thus."

"Ah, now, Darya," David protested.

Darya acceded. "Well, let us say, my father would so receive you. I grant you that I have been spoiled. Also I am lazy. It is so much trouble to observe the old formalities. All that I can do is to try to observe the decencies. What my sons will do when they are grown I cannot tell. By that time—"

He looked towards the door, interrupted by the sound of children's voices, and he rose to his feet. "Ah, here they come."

AS Darya spoke, the curtain was parted and Leilamani stood there with her children, one on either side. Forever after when David thought of her, he saw her as she was at that moment, a beautiful, shy woman, a tall girl as many of the Marathi were tall, her slender figure wrapped in a long Poona sari of palest yellow silk with a broad border of heavy gold.

She had drawn the end over her soft, curling, black hair, and her great black eyes glowed in the golden shadows. Her small, full lips she had painted scarlet, and in the middle of her forehead was the tiny circle of scarlet that was the sign of her high birth.

He rose to his feet and then Olivia rose and involuntarily she put out her hand to the beautiful Indian girl.

"Come," Darya commanded his wife, "these are our friends. This is Olivia."

Leilamani walked forward slowly, her bare feet in gold sandals, and the children clung to her as she came.

"You must shake hands with Olivia, but you need not with David," Darya commanded. His voice was imperious but his eyes were tender, and she put out a soft, narrow hand to Olivia, the nails painted as scarlet as her mouth.

"Say Olivia," Darya bade her.

"O-livia," Leilamani said below her breath, accenting the first letter.

"Leilamani," Olivia replied. She pressed the pretty hand slightly and then released it.

"These are my two naughty boys," Darya said carelessly. He tumbled the curly dark heads. "This one is five and this one is four. We shall have another one, boy or girl, six months from now."

The children released their tight hold on their mother's sari. The elder leaned towards Olivia's tray and she gave him a tartlet. The small one immediately put out a minute brown palm and in it also she laid a tartlet.

"Enough," Darya said with authority. "Go away now and play."

They were obedient immediately, and walked away hand in hand, tartlets at their mouths.

Leilamani seated herself beside Darya, careful not to touch him in public, and Darya watched her with a loving and solicitous pride.

"She does very well, eh? This wife of mine, Olivia. She is in purdah until she married. Never did she see a strange man. When she went out with other women in the family it was always in a curtained carriage. I remember that when her father ordered an English carriage enclosed in glass, he had the glass painted so that no one could see in and no one could see out. Eh, Leilamani?"

Leilamani nodded, smiling, and did not speak.

Darya coaxed her. "Now, Leilamani, you must speak some English. I have been teaching her, Olivia. I have

told her that she must learn to speak English as fast as you learn Marathi. That is fair, isn't it?"

"I'm not sure that it is," Olivia said, smiling at Leilamani. "I think English is easier."

"Now, now," Darya cried.

It was all banter and small talk, and David sat listening and taking no part but enjoying it and understanding very well that Darya was gently and patiently helping his wife to forget her shyness and show them her delicately gay self.

Slowly she did what he wished, first by gentle movements, then by sitting a favorite sweetmeat, then by smiling, and then by a soft laugh, until, when Darya grew too bold, she gave him a little push with both hands against his cheek.

Olivia was enchanted. She had never seen such a woman as Leilamani, a creature so young, so childish, and yet so profoundly feminine, so sophisticated in her femaleness. Leilamani was all woman and unconscious of any other possible being. She patted her little, round abdomen and then touched Olivia's flat waist with tentative fingers.

"Yes?" she asked softly.

"No," Olivia said, shaking her head.

"Soon?" Leilamani asked with pretty hopefulness.

"Perhaps," Olivia said, very uncomfortable.

Darya burst into laughter again. "You mustn't mind, Olivia. Like all Indian women who have not been spoiled by Western life, Leilamani feels her first pride is in being able to have children. It is a proof of her quality as a woman. Indian women had rather be dead than be barren. Is that too hard for you to understand?"

"I think it is," Olivia said.

She was aware now that Leilamani was watching her with enormous and reflective eyes. She was fearfully examining Olivia's face and hair and figure. She put out her hand and felt the stuff of her thin blue silk dress, then she took Olivia's hand in her left one and stroked it gently with her right one. She smiled frankly and sweetly at Olivia, coaxing her to friendliness.

It was an enchanting sight, and the two men looked on enjoying it.

"She is telling you that she is going to love you as her sister," Darya said. "You must not be shy, Olivia. We believe that love is the best gift of all and never to be withheld when it exists. I can tell you that Leilamani does not often give it so freely. She is a proud little thing, this wife of mine!"

"Tell her I am happy that I came and I hope she will let me come often," Olivia said.

It was too little to say, when Leilamani poured over her this warmth of affection and trust, but she was confused. She was aware of strange feelings within her, a melting of inner hardness that she did not know she had, a softening of her heart, a new perception of woman, something that Leilamani was which she was not and which she was not sure she wanted to be, and yet which attracted her strongly.

Leilamani was a mixture of witchery and wisdom, youth and age, simplicity and complexity, emotion and shrewd common sense. She felt crude and big-boned and harsh, she wanted to go away and she wanted to stay and ease at Leilamani. She was repelled by her and yet she longed to embrace her. She was jealous of her beauty and delighted by it.

It was an overwhelming, inexplicable, exciting hour and when it ended and they came away, she was exhausted. She was not at all sure that she was going to like India entirely or even that she could bear it always.

That night in his bed when he was drowsing off to sleep in the darkness and the whining of the mosquitoes was diving away in his ears, David was astonished to hear the patter of Olivia's bare feet on the floor. He woke up at once, for never had she dared to walk at night in the dark or without her shoes.

"Olivia, is that you?" He sat up and felt for the matches and the candles always inside the net.

"Yes, don't light the candle."

"Why not? What's wrong?"

"I don't know. Oh, David, love me!"

"But, darling, I do love you!"

"Oh, but more, more, more!"

She was half sobbing and he did not know what to make of it. He lifted the net and pulled her inside. "Come in, dearest. Why are you crying? Are you ill?"

To none of his questions did she reply. Here was an Olivia he had never seen before, melted in weeping and clinging to him, passionate and demanding and insistent.

"Oh, love me—love me—"

she was crying, and at last he abandoned himself to her, passion rising and then rising again to climax and finally to exhaustion. Never, never had he allowed himself to be absorbed like this, never had he been compelled beyond his own control.

When it was over and she was asleep he could not sleep. For the first time since their marriage he had a sense of sin. What he had done, what she had compelled him to do, was not good. He had never seen this demand in her before, but it was not right for him. He lay deeply troubled and after a time he rose and went into the bathing-room and washed his body clean from head to foot. Then he put on clean garments and went into his study and closed the door. He lit the lamp and tried to read some scriptures, but the words were empty and would be empty until he had acknowledged his sin.

He had been overcome. She had tempted him, yes, but he would not use that excuse as old as Adam. His soul was his own, and he had not kept it undefiled.

He turned the lamp low and got down on his knees by his desk and bowed his head and sent up his prayer in shame and contrition. "God, forgive me—"

After a long while he felt comfort pervade him slowly, like light rising over a mountain, but his prayer was not finished. He lifted his head and prayed again, "God, give me strength."

And while he prayed, Olivia slept.

THE weather turned and grew cool, as cool as Poona weather ever was, but Olivia was languid. Her days were spent in a routine, pleasant enough but unchanging, and she marvelled that she did not mind. She was getting lazy, she told herself, and it was an effort to return the dinners to which she and David had been invited, most important of which was a dinner due the Governor and his wife.

She made the effort, because David insisted that he must be friendly with Government or he could not do his work. It was difficult, nationalism was rising, Government was irritable and Americans were suspected of being sympathetic with the nationalist movement and ultimately with

independence for India. History was against them.

"I am very glad to find that you are sound, Mr. MacArd," the Governor said somewhat patronisingly at the dinner-table.

Olivia, at the opposite end of the oval table, listened for David's reply.

"I am against revolution, Your Excellency," David replied calmly. "That is not to say I am against change. I am doing my best to educate young Indians who will wish eventually to rule their own country, doubtless, but it will be within the scheme of evolutionary order and not in my time or yours, probably."

"Oh, well, as to that," the Governor said tolerantly, "we shall of course give them a gradual independence as they are fit for it. Certainly they are not fit for it now, with four-fifths of the people illiterate and ignorant."

Olivia spoke too quickly. "Your Excellency, I've wondered so much why they are like this after hundreds of years of enlightened rule under the British Empire."

She dared not look at David, instead she fastened her eyes brightly and defiantly upon the Governor's dignified square face.

His voice sharpened. "Oh, come now, Mrs. MacArd, don't you go saying such things. It will take more than a few hundred years to change India completely. Consider her condition when we came in, and how long it took us merely to establish order. A hundred years passed before we could begin really to govern. As it is, we are still not responsible for the entire country. There are the Native Princes. We are not tyrants, you know. We don't force things down Indian throats."

A general movement swayed the guests into conversation, as though by common impulse they moved to cover Olivia's question. Nothing more must be said, and Olivia's brief emergence was drowned.

She yielded, as she yielded in everything nowadays. She sat quietly smiling, eating with good appetite, for she was always hungry, to her own surprise, and yet food gave her no energy.

The evening passed, and when the guests were gone she waited for David to reprove her for the question, but he did not. He was aloof, but he was always aloof now, and she supposed it was because he was so busy. The buildings were going up rapidly, and he was already receiving students. Ramsay was with him every day and on some days all day long, and she saw very little of her husband.

The servants put out the lights, and they went to their rooms. She clung to his arm as they walked down the hall.

"Are you tired?" David asked.

"A little," she confessed. Tomorrow she would tell him that she was always tired and perhaps something was wrong with her. But she did not want to tell him tonight, she was too tired for explanation. He stood aside for her to enter their room and the sweet past him, holding up her long silken skirts with both hands.

In the doorway she paused. "Did I look pretty tonight?" she asked.

He hesitated and she saw his eyes grow wary. "Very pretty," he said calmly.

Why don't you kiss me? That was what she had been about to say. When she saw the withdrawal in his eyes she leaned and kissed his cheek.

"Good night, David."

"Good night, Olivia. But why now, my dear?"

"I think I shall sleep in the guest-room tonight. I am tired."

He waited a second, two seconds, before he replied. "A

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good idea, perhaps. You look a little pale."

She turned and left him then and for the first time since their marriage she went to bed alone.

He did not care, then! That was what she began to think. He did not call to her and tell her to come back. He did not love her, actually, as she loved him. She began to cry softly and it occurred to her that these days she was crying too easily.

The next afternoon, beset by this strange new loneliness, she thought of one friend after another whom she might go to see. Not Mrs. Fordham, certainly, who was always voluble with disapproving advice because Olivia never went to prayer meeting and seldom to church, and not little Miss Parker, who made her sad, and none of the formal English ladies, because they did not like Americans. Who then but Leilamani?

At the thought of Leilamani she felt her heart relax, and she called her carriage and, without telling anyone, for David was nowhere to be seen, she bade the driver go across the city to Darva's house.

There she found Darva not at home and the gatekeeper very hesitant about allowing her to enter his master's gate. He conferred long with the driver in Marathi, of which Olivia could only gather enough to understand that Leilamani never received English ladies.

"But I am not English," Olivia said and then found that when she spoke Marathi it was enough. No English ladies spoke Marathi, and the gatekeeper admitted her at once, and she bade a servant inside the gate to tell his mistress that she was there.

She stood waiting in the beautiful garden, where birds cunningly tied to branches of trees sang as sweetly as though they were free, and a pet gazelle, brought perhaps from the foothills of the Himalayas, came dancing to her to sniff at her hand for cakes. She touched its wet, dark nose and it sprang back, staring at her innocently and fearfully.

The servant came back and invited her to come in, and when she had entered three doors she saw Leilamani herself walking towards her, hands outstretched to grasp her hands and hold them.

"Sister, you have come alone," Leilamani said. "Now we can talk, I am so glad you have come."

"Speak very slowly, please," Olivia said. "My Marathi is still very bad."

"It is good," Leilamani exclaimed, "and I still do not know any English. I am too stupid. He tries to teach me, but it makes me laugh and then—" she broke into rippling laughter and shook her head. "Come in, come, sister."

Still clinging to Olivia's hand, she led her into the room where the children played, and each child must come forward and greet Olivia with his hands together, and she kissed each one on the cheek while Leilamani watched, and then she obeyed Leilamani's inviting gesture and sank down on the cushions.

It was pleasant here and she felt relaxed and at ease. The afternoon sun shone in the open door and the little boys played quietly at the far end of the long room. Tall brass vases held fragrant lilies and the air was faintly perfumed and very still.

"It is so quiet," Olivia said. "How is it your house is always quiet, even with children?"

"It is not quiet when he is here or our relatives come," Leilamani said. "It is only that I am quiet, because I like to be so. Others talk, but I listen. Sleep, sister—you look weary."

Olivia smiled and, leaning

against the cushions, she closed her eyes. "I mustn't sleep," she murmured. "I'll just rest a few minutes."

But she could not rest and, opening her eyes, she found that Leilamani, sitting a little distance away, was watching her with intent interest. She turned her head to look at a hanging on the wall and then to speak to the children.

Servants brought in the usual fruit juices and sweetmeats, she ate and drank, concealing her inordinate hunger and thirst, she thought, and then Leilamani's watching eyes were not to be avoided. She met them fully and suddenly Leilamani broke into laughter and clapped her hands.

"You, too, sister!" she cried. She leaned over and patted Olivia's waist with both hands. Olivia stared at her, not comprehending.

"Yes, I know it is so," Leilamani said, half singing.

A hot blush rushed over Olivia's whole body. Yes, perhaps—and if it were so, that was why she was so languid, so hungry, so careless of what happened in the house.

"I did not know it myself," she faltered.

"Ah, it is good for me to be the first to tell you," Leilamani said joyfully. "I am the bearer of good news. It is certain that I am right. I shall tell him, my sons' father. He will be very happy and he will tell his brother in your house and we will all be happy."

SUDDENLY, Leilamani sat up listening. "Ah, is that he? I hear him. I will tell him now!"

"No, no, please," Olivia begged. "I must tell my own husband first. I must go home now."

She did not question Leilamani's certainty. Instinctively, she felt it true—it explained all that she had not understood.

"Go then," Leilamani said, excited, "go and come back soon. I shall pray to Sita that it is a son."

When Olivia reached home David was waiting for her, a letter in his hand. She stopped in the doorway at sight of his grave face.

"I have been to see Leilamani—"

"So the gatekeeper told me. I have received a letter from the Governor, Olivia. He is displeased at what you asked him last night and he takes great pains to explain—"

She burst into wild, inexplicable tears. "Don't scold me, David—not now! I am going to have a baby."

She threw herself on his breast and felt his arms close about her and the letter dropped to the floor.

David had come with Olivia to the hills for a week, that they might be alone together. A week entire from his life he gave her as a gift, because she was with child. It was true, the British doctor in Poona confirmed it to him. Then he had added advice.

"She's a bit nervy, though, Mr. MacArd. Get her away for a short holiday."

Up from the shallow valley in the hills they heard at evening the thin wailing song which was the song of India, the human music of the villages. Till my heart, O Beloved, As I am tilling this land. And make me Thine, As I am making this land my own.

Till my heart, O Beloved! Somewhere in the swiftly fading dusk a man worked late upon his land and he sang while he worked. They heard his voice, and David felt the quick grip of his wife's hand. "What are you feeling, Olivia?"

They were sitting in the enclosed verandah of the hill house, safe against the night insects, and the cool high air was refreshing. Though he had decided upon this week alone with her, he could not leave his thoughts behind in Poona, nor his spreading plans, nor, above all, his doubts.

His life, he sometimes thought, was a series of strong steps forward, and then long pauses of doubt. Thus, was it wise to set up these great buildings, to erect vast edifices for the future? Was he building in God-driven faith, or was he simply the son of MacArd, compelled by his inherited perspectives to create huge shapes of brick and stone?

And yet India herself compelled large thinking, immense plans. Millions waited and he could not consider in terms of one and one and one and one—"That music makes me fearfully lonely," Olivia said suddenly.

"Why?"

"Even here with you I am lonely, a sort of world loneliness I cannot define."

"Perhaps it is only that you can't see the face of the man who sings," he suggested.

"Perhaps."

They fell silent. It was too much effort, she thought, to explain herself to him. For if she did, or could, his mind would not stay upon what she said. The voice of the lonely man had sent him far off. He was dreaming his vast dreams, and, though he loved her and she was sure of that, she knew now that she was not his only love.

She must share him with millions of people, with these singers in the night, whose faces he did not see, though they were continually with him, the stuff of his thoughts and dreams. She had lost him for herself alone.

Those few days in the hills had shown her clearly enough that she could never possess him, because he was already possessed, and her hold upon him, whatever it was, could grow only if she became a part of all that he loved. That is, she, too, must give herself to India. Even the child could not make David wholly her own.

For a wild solitary moment she was desperately homesick for her own country, for home, even for her mother, and certainly for the streets of New York. What was she doing here in this lonely countryside, lifted upon these tiger-haunted hills above the valleys of India?

She gripped his hand, clinging to it for all she had. There was no response, though no repulse. He let his hand be held.

And if she had been able to love David when he was the young boy who had thrown himself at her feet, begging her to love him, the boy who had seemed spoiled and childish, not a man worth loving for a strong girl like her, but if she had foreseen this man he now was and could have loved the boy in patience, would he then have loved her only and with his whole heart?

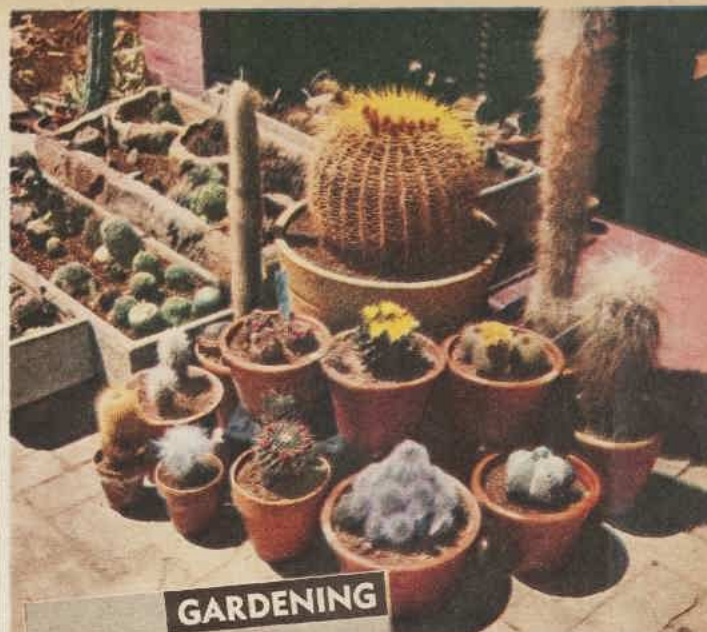
Ah, but had she loved him, and let him so love her, he would never have grown into this man whom she adored because he did not bend to her. She had what she wanted, a strong self-contained man, intent upon his work, and perhaps such a man could never love only a woman, not even her, not at least when her rival was India.

"The air is getting damp," she said.

"Shall we go in?" he asked. "Yes, I am tired."

They walked together into the big central room, a lamp was turned low and the light

To page 38



GARDENING

Cactus culture

Cactus culture is a specialised art requiring study and care, and inexperienced gardeners should consult a specialist before investing in a big collection.

FINE COLLECTION of cacti was grown by Mr. L. O. Olsson, of Hurstville, N.S.W. The big, spiny character at the rear is 36 years old. Those in front include flowering mammillarias.

ered with at least one-third drainage material—coarse gravel, for instance. The rest should be filled up with decayed vegetable matter or "cow manure" that is at least 12 months old, a little leafmould, and some very coarse sand.

For an outdoor cactus bed, a gentle slope is ideal. The soil should be dug out and a foundation of stones or broken bricks placed at the bottom. This should be covered with a layer of gravel and topped with good, sandy loam. Most desert cacti like an alkaline soil, and slaked or garden lime in small quantities should be added and mixed in thoroughly.

With such a wide range of plants it is impossible to name many, but the beginner will find beautiful blooms among the neomammillarias, rebutias, notocacti, dolichotheles, trichocereus, ferro-cacti, opuntias, and echinocereus.

The quaint cephalocereus senilis, or Old Man cactus, has long, whitish fibres that resemble hair trailing from the top downward. It is one of the most ornamental types of cacti.

Others resemble cardinals' hats, powder-puffs, pineapples, or spiny mounds. The flowers of cacti vary from pure white through cream, yellow, primrose, pink, red, maroon to chocolate.

Many are slow growers and take years to reach any size. Others, particularly the jungle and tropical types, will grow fast when given suitable soil, aspect, and climate.

Cacti, either the potted or outdoor varieties, can be grown from seed or cuttings, but in both cases care has to be taken not to damp off seedlings by over-watering or to plant cuttings until the severed end has calloused in the open air for several days.

Never feed cacti unless they are strong, vigorous plants that have filled their pots with healthy roots. Feed only during the growing season (usually late spring and summer), and then sparingly.

Generally, they do not need much fertiliser. Bone meal or fine dust, wood ashes, and very old cow manure well dried out may be used with discretion.

Some types never bear flowers, but those that do are often very slow to bloom and take years to mature and produce blossoms.

Study the individual plants, provide them with the best possible environment, and see that they have a period of rest immediately before the season of active growth. This can be done by gradual reduction of the water supply. Potted cactus plants should be watered by soaking them in a bigger container until the bubbling ceases.

Then remove them and let them drain well. They should never be allowed to dry out entirely or they may die.

CACTI, though they are now grown in every country in the world, are native only to the Western Hemisphere, where they extend from British Columbia through the United States to South America.

There are now about 1500 named species and subdivisions, ranging from tiny, spiny plants that rarely exceed an inch or two in height or width to giants that may grow to 30 or more feet high and form dense thickets.

Cacti vary in shape from huge columnar, branched or unbranched forms to slender climbing vines; from gnarled tree-like, rugged masses like *Cereus Peruvianus monstrosus* to picturesque, rounded forms like the mammillarias. All families include very lovely flowering types.

Few have leaves, the roots vary greatly, and some flower only at night and have a strong scent. The blooms vary, too, in size. Some are only half an inch across; others measure 15 or 16 inches across and are almost as tall.

Their soil, climatic, and water requirements also differ. Although they come mostly from arid country or semi-desert, some are jungle plants or native to the tropics. Others are semi-parasites which live largely on dead trees, and others again grow among rocks.

All cacti are succulent, built by nature to store up any moisture obtainable and to take it up, sometimes too greedily. One essential factor in their culture is good drainage. In no circumstances will they tolerate sodden soil, and the choicest plants may be ruined in a single day by standing in water.

Those of tropical origin are liable to die if frosted, and, therefore, only the varieties that will withstand frost should be grown out of doors in cool climates. Indoor culture in pots is essential for tropical species.

Use some well-rotted compost in all soil for cacti. The bottoms of pots should be cov-

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was dim. He put his arm about her and she leaned upon him. "David, I am glad we are going to have the baby." "Tell me why." He was suddenly tender. "I know, my darling, I feel it's God's blessing, but tell me why." She could not tell him the truth as suddenly it appeared to her. If she had a baby, if there were children whom she must tend, then she would not be free to give herself to India. She would not have time, she must put their children first as her duty.

"I want four children, at least," she said, her face against his breast. "And while you do your work, I will take care of them. I won't make demands of you, David, I will let you be free to do your work."

"My perfect wife," he murmured.

She felt his hand smoothing her hair, and she closed her eyes and pressed herself to him fiercely. Oh, she would live her life around him, her love would be his atmosphere, and, though he might not know the air he breathed, he would never know, either, that his God was not hers or that she needed no other god than love.

At the end of the week they went back to Poona and the mission house. She dismissed the Marathi teacher. Let the communication with India cease. She would be only David's wife.

She sent word to Leilamani that she was not well and could not visit her, and when Darya came up on their return from the hills she was distant with him, and he did not reproach her because Leilamani had told him, and he knew that pregnant women were wilful and changeable.

"It tires me," she told David when she found that he was displeased that she had sent away her teacher.

It was to be her weapon, this easy fatigue in a climate unnaturally hot, and he did not protest. How could a man protest? The woman carried the burden of the child as well as herself. She needed double energy, twice the amount of sleep, and her appetite had failed.

He would not harass her, he would be more considerate of her, more tender towards her, remembering the immensity of the task that was only hers. He kissed her gently, and forgave her for the quick retort she made.

"I'm not made of glass, David! Don't kiss me as if I were something breakable."

She flung this at him and he was startled by the anger in her dark eyes. Then he laughed.

"You temptress," he muttered, and taking a step towards her he pulled her into

Continuing . . . Come, My Beloved

[from page 37]

his arms and kissed her hard and long.

"That better?" "Yes—but again—" she whispered.

In the midst of their long embrace, standing in the middle of the floor, their bodies pressed together, the door opened and the ayah looked in, saw them and shut the door, horror upon her astonished face. They turned their heads, they saw the look, and he drew away from her.

"Oh, that ayah!" Olivia cried under her breath.

"After all, Olivia, it's the middle of the afternoon and I ought to be at work."

"You haven't really kissed me for days, not since we came back from Poona."

He laughed, embarrassed. "Ah, we're married, my love. We're together, aren't we? And I must be off, now."

"Oh well—"

He saw her pouting look, he caught her face in his two hands and tipping her chin upwards kissed her heartily, but without passion, smiled down into her rebellious eyes and went quickly away.

And she stood there alone in the middle of the room, and made a symbol out of what had happened. It was India that had interrupted them and would always disturb them and separate him from her. What could one woman do against that stealthy and eternal figure?

THIS was the year the monsoons failed. At first the anxious people had told each other that the sacred winds were only late. Sometimes they delayed for a week or even a month. Delay was grave enough, for delayed monsoons meant a meagre rainy season, and so much the less water for the fields and the year's needs.

Week passed after week and hope gave way at last to certainty. The warm currents of air had swept aside, they had curved to other regions. The north had abundant rain and even the east had short but heavy rains. On the west of India, beyond the high central plateaus, no rains fell, and David foresaw inevitable famine and the people yielded themselves to hopelessness.

Yes, there would be a famine. There was no possibility of avoiding it now. Food supplies, already at the lowest ebb, were hoarded still further and the poor prepared to die. In the midst of this distress Olivia was delivered of her child. She had refused to go to Bombay and the English hospital for her confinement, and the local British doctor had tended her, and a pleasant

Eurasian nurse had come in to stay for a month.

The child was a boy. He was born late in the afternoon while the dry heat shimmered over the city of his birth. The air was so dry, the doctor grumbled, that he could not sweat. He was grateful that his patient was young and strong. He disliked delivering white women and he always advised them to go to Bombay, but this one was stubborn against all advice.

Had there been complications he would not have felt responsibility. But there were none. The mother was strong and controlled. She had asked that her husband be summoned, and when it was found that he had gone into the native city she had accepted the situation.

A few hours later, when it was over, she lay gasping for a moment and then drew a deep breath.

"Is it a good baby?" she asked.

"A fine son," the doctor replied. "I congratulate you."

The plump little nurse, eternally smiling, held up the tiny newborn boy, wrapped in a square of blue flannel, and Olivia looked at her son for a long instant. Then she laughed.

"Why, he's the image of his old grandfather!" she said cheerfully. "He'll have red hair and red eyebrows and a bad temper."

They laughed with her, and the doctor twisted his dyed moustache. A pity the husband wasn't here, he thought. Such courage was rare. White women usually went soft in this climate.

He went away feeling proud of himself, and was very stern with the nurse lest she bungle the case, after all. One could never trust these half-Indians as one trusted a real British nurse.

When David came in at nightfall, every light was lit in the house and servants waited with gleaming eyes and hushed voices.

"Sahib—"

"Sahib—your son—"

"Sahib—"

They chattered together, each trying to be the bearer of the royal news, and then the nurse heard them and came out with the blue bundle in her arms, and David, as dazed as though he had not known for months that this must happen, stared down into the round, firm face of his son.

"Mrs. MacArd says he looks like your father, sir," the nurse chirped.

"So he does," David exclaimed. He was not at all sure that he liked the idea. Never-

theless, the resemblance was plain. The boy looked back at his father with astonishing calm.

"I don't believe he likes me," David said.

The nurse laughed. "He can't see you, sir. They never do at this age."

"That's a relief."

He felt suddenly gay in spite of a most depressing day. In the native city the streets were already lined with refugees from the country. He had gone to see for himself what was happening, and he had listened to their stories of empty granaries and cracked fields. Their cattle were dead skeletons and their wells were dried. Only in the city were there still stores of food and to the city they had come to beg.

He had made up his mind as he walked homeward that he would appeal to the local Governor for help tomorrow, but he knew that the remote and pessimistic Englishman would probably only shrug his shoulders and refer him to the Governor-General in Bombay.

Well, then to Bombay he would go if he must. Meanwhile, ironically, his school was as full as ever. The sons of the rich were his pupils.

All this was now forgotten. He smiled down at his son, and then passed to enter the room where Olivia lay.

"She's sleeping, sir," the nurse exclaimed.

But he went in nevertheless and tiptoed to the bed, beside which a candle burned. Through the misty white of the mosquito net he saw Olivia lying straight and still. She had been tidied, he supposed, by the nurse, for her dark hair was carefully brushed and braided into two long black braids over her shoulders and her hands were folded on her breast.

The sheet was drawn up tightly and doubled back under her arms, and the lace-edged ruffles of her white linen nightgown framed her unconscious face. She was breathing deeply and softly, and he noticed now as he never had before how long her dark lashes were as they lay upon her white cheeks.

Standing there, seeing her without being seen, he felt a rush of new and unutterable love for her. How beautiful she was, how faithful, and how strong! Another woman would have complained that she was left so much alone, even alone at the hour of birth, but she never complained and would not now.

He had not treasured her enough, he thought with remorse, and from now on he would show his love more plainly while they shared the child. But he longed to show her now how he loved her, and lifting the net he crept inside and sat upon the edge of the bed and put his hand gently over her hands.

She opened her eyes slowly, as though she came back from some far place, and then she saw it was he.

"Darling David," she murmured, still asleep.

He leaned to whisper to her. "I saw him, dearest. I saw our lovely son!"

A smile flickered at her lips. "All MacArd!"

"Isn't it funny? But perhaps he is like you inside."

"I want him to be like you."

"We'll wait and see."

"Oh, but I'm sleepy—" Her voice trailed away in sleep and her eyelids trembled downward.

"Sleep, dearest," he said. "I shouldn't have waked you."

The eyelids quivered upward at that, and she gave him a look of heavenly happiness and slept again.

He stole away, closing the door noiselessly behind him, and went to his study to be alone that he might give thanks to God.

To be continued

THIS WEEK'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Disease of corn caused by backwards sounds of a banjo (4).
2. Affirm lengths of existence with general prevailing rates (8).
3. Helped forward a particle of dust in thrust (8).
4. Hit her, if her name is daily (4).
5. The material for a long tooth is animal, but is also vegetable with an alternative in it (5).
6. American state in twin sister of Apollo (7).
7. The beginning is a sin and the whole is stupid (7).
8. When I distribute the cards it's perfect (3).
9. Deer backs into the gangster guns (4).
10. Monetary stake usually expressed in % (8).
11. According to Tam O'Shanter his "laugh was ready chorus" (8).
12. Turns the outside of which calls for help (4).

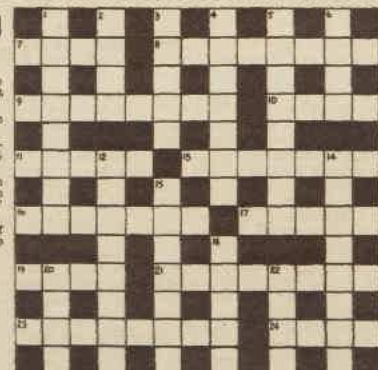
Solution will be published next week.

S A L T M I S S
T A C T I L E I M P E L
U T I M O S A A
M A O R I R A I T R A P
O R T I S
L O S T A D J A C E N T
E A I L A
D I V I D E N D G R I M
F I N N I S H P E T E R
A B O R I T I
S T E R E O M I N O U S
T E D O G N I K

Solution to last week's crossword.

1. Gets better when the devil roams (8).
2. A pig-stealer is very small but mighty (4).
3. Divisions of skill in afterthoughts (3).
4. Giving temporarily the end to a fish (7).
5. Thanks, mother, the bark is a very nice tropical tree (5).
6. Ecclesiastic, one famous was gloomy and another is red (4).
7. Eager Ned could be a turncoat (8).
8. On the left (4, 4).
9. Firedog and common metal (7).
10. This room if in disorder could be dusty (8).
11. Public vehicle reaches the trade-centre if going backwards (4).
12. The remaining part in further Estonia? (4).

DOWN



my poor ignorant pigeon, is a big man in the magazine world. And he's starting a new magazine called 'Swift.'

"Like the birds at evening? Or like swift—fast?"

"Swift, fast. After all, I don't draw birds, do I?"

"You could if you wanted to!"

"But I don't. I draw girls—and he wants girls. For a section of the magazine called 'Fair and Feminine.' And he needs an artist like me on his staff."

"Oh, Tim! Have you sent in any drawings?"

"No. The chap who told me about this said not to. He said Norris has a couple of thousand secretaries who like to toss people's stuff in the waste-paper basket just for the fun of it. The idea is to get to Norris personally. That," Tim added, with a frown, "is not going to be easy."

Betsy considered the matter. "You couldn't just go to his office and send in a drawing instead of a card? So he'd have to see it?"

Tim shook his head indolently. "That's not the way to deal with one of these big shots. I'll have to work out a plan and see if I can find some string to pull. . . . In the meantime, I ought to get a few more drawings ready."

Betsy smiled at him, for the hundredth time noticing his ears, which were large and protruded rather prominently. They gave him character, she thought, and they made her feel so maternal she could almost have choked.

"Well," she said, "I've posed for you in every way I can think of except standing on my head. Do you want that?"

"I'd love it, funny face—but what I really need is another model."

"Oh."

"Just for variety, you understand."

"You want a tall girl?" faltered Betsy. "A blonde, perhaps?"

"That would be it. Know one?"

"Not a single one!" Betsy said happily. "Isn't that a shame?"

"I can't think of anybody,

either—and I've gone over every blessed girl in town."

"Couldn't you just sort of mentally stretch me a few inches?"

"Afraid not, Betsy. An artist doesn't work like that. But keep your eyes open for a tall individual, will you? With curves?"

She nodded, serenely unaware that a tall young woman, with curves, was looming even now upon the horizon.

Tim had scarcely departed—

to cope, reluctantly, with a job for his father—when Betsy's good friend, Jane Bennington, arrived in a buttercup-colored drophead coupe almost as long as a bus. It was not Jane's car. Jane didn't even own a wheelbarrow. At the wheel of the car was an exquisite stranger.

"Betsy, this is Andrea Loring," Jane explained, as she led her companion into the house. "She's come to live here!"

Betsy, almost rigid with dismay, managed to rouse herself, and even to give Andrea a feeble little smile.

"I hope you're going to like it here, Miss Loring."

"It's charming," the other murmured.

Her words had no r's, and she drewled. She was very much like her car, expensive and sleek and beautiful. A mink coat was flung over a smoke-grey suit, and a number of intricate gold- and -diamond charms dangled from her wrist.

Her small hat revealed one smooth wing of fair, shining hair, and a silk blouse with a plunging neckline revealed—Betsy acknowledged, in bitter regret—curves that were all too definite and unmistakable.

"Are you really going to be here long?" she asked cautiously.

"Just till the New Year," Andrea said. "My father had some weird idea that this was the place for him to rest—

where there wouldn't be anything amusing to distract him."

"Mr. Loring's a film producer," Jane put in, proudly.

The conversation turned,

then, to a long account of the Loring's recent visit to Hollywood, and of the stars whom the Loring's knew intimately. Andrea, with Jane's ecstatic urging, told of the parties she'd attended where practically everybody was a Name.

Betsy had a fleeting moment of relief. Certainly, she thought, a rich, glamorous girl who was used to mixing with Names wouldn't want to pose for an artist who wasn't—as yet—famous. She'd probably be insulted if anyone were to suggest such a thing.

She beamed upon her guest.

"Won't you stay for supper?"

"Oh, no, thanks! I've got to be buzzing along. Family dinner tonight—and I'm supposed to be there to help with the bright chatter and the cocktails. My Uncle Colin's coming."

"Her uncle," explained Jane, again welling with pride, "is Colin Norris, the big magazine publisher."

"Oh—" cried Betsy, in a shrill, strange voice. "Oh, he is?"

The lovely Andrea seemed amused. "Why not? He had to be somebody's uncle! And he's not as horrible as he's supposed to be," she admitted.

"He's an old darling, really."

Still—Betsy told herself—the great man might not have any faith in Andrea's opinions. Why, her own Uncle Ned laughed at every word she said, as if she were a slightly demented child of two.

Introducing Tim to Andrea might be the worst possible thing she could do for him. If Andrea tried to wangle a job for him, she might even queer his chances for good. Why, yes, obviously it was better to say nothing at all about Tim or the new magazine.

"Betsy!" Jane said. "What are you looking so sick about?"

"Nothing," Betsy said, with a light laugh. "I'm sorry you have to go so soon."

"See you again some time," Andrea murmured.

Then she pulled the mink coat, casually, over one shoulder, and preceded the worshipping Jane from the room . . .

Continuing . . . Helpless Little Thing

from page 9

Betsy tried to forget her. She tried to forget how tall she was, and how blonde, and how curved. She also tried to forget she was Colin Norris' niece. Anyway, she assured herself fiercely, she needn't tell Tim anything about it until after the club dance.

That dance, in itself, was a miracle, and it might engender further miracles. Betsy was not going to the dance with Tim because he had fallen into any romantic mood.

She was going simply because Tim's father had suggested it one afternoon when Betsy was posing for Tim, this time with her arm, full of pins and needles, wrapped around a small, infuriated Welsh terrier. "Why don't you take poor little Betsy to that dance, Tim? She ought to get something for all this nonsense she puts up with!"

Certainly Betsy could not consider Tim's absentminded assent to this proposition as any major tribute to her own personal charms. Nevertheless, she was going to a dance with him. That was the miraculous fact which, for three weeks, had filled her days with glory.

She had squandered, for the occasion, two months' allowance on an apple-green dress and silver shoes with tiny rhinestone buckles and three-inch heels. She caught her mother's eye in the mirror, and sent her a diffident smile.

"I look almost human, don't I?"

"You look like an angel! . . . It's embarrassing," her mother added. "But I'm afraid I've got a good maternal lump in my throat."

"Do you think Tim will notice my dress?"

"He will," said her mother, "unless he's blinder and dumber than usual. That, of course, seems utterly impossible."

"Well, this time I really do think he might notice, Mother. Green's one of his favorite colors."

Again, her eyes beaming softly with hope, she consid-

ered the gratifying reflection in the mirror. She pictured herself floating into Tim Hammond's arms, dancing to the strains of sweet music, perhaps managing to smile at him a little provocatively.

And she saw Tim's gaze growing more and more ardent. He simply wouldn't be able to believe this was the unsophisticated girl next door. Then the telephone rang.

"Look," Tim said, "you aren't really keen about going to that dance, are you, Betsy?"

Her mouth suddenly went dry. Her knees trembled.

"Well, no! Well, no, not at all!" she said in a bright, gay voice. "It doesn't mean a thing to me, one way or the other! But has anything happened, Tim?"

"Well, I've got a chance to go to some dinner tonight—and Colin Norris is going to be one of the speakers! I'll just make it if I hurry. I thought if I could find a way to talk to him—and if you didn't have your heart set on the dance—"

"Oh, but that's ridiculous! Don't give it another thought!"

"You hadn't started to get dressed yet, had you?"

"Oh, no! No, no! I've still got on my old blue slacks."

Tim laughed. "And you'll have a better time at home in those, I'll bet!"

Betsy managed a carefree laugh before she bade him goodbye. Then she had to come to his defence. Her mother's ideas of the punishment Tim deserved, and which she personally would have liked to inflict on him, were varied, fantastic, and rich in imagery.

"You don't understand at all, Mother! Tim had no idea he was disappointing me. He just thinks of me as a sort of nice little thing who's too young to go to a dance anyway. And that's my fault! It must be a girl's fault if a man thinks she's just a nice little thing."

But she did not linger to debate the point. She escaped to her room, where she took off the apple-green dress, put on an old dressing-gown, and plunged into a copy of "Moby

Dick," one of Tim's favorite books.

She wanted to be able to discuss it with him intelligently, and the fact that she was exceedingly bored with "Moby Dick" had nothing to do with the matter.

Tim was very contrite the next morning.

"My father was livid with me. He said you might have been sort of upset about missing that bun-fight."

She handed him a slice of coffee cake. She had remembered that he liked coffee cake. And it seemed of no great importance that the members of her own family preferred the flavor of chocolate. When Betsy was sent out to do the shopping—she shopped for the young man next door.

"Upset?" she was repeating now, incredulously. "Me? You know, it's a funny thing, Tim—but people of that generation never understand our generation."

"That's a fact. But perhaps it was a pity we missed the dance—because Colin Norris didn't show up at that dinner last night."

Betsy stared at him. "What are you going to do now?"

"I haven't the faintest idea. But you know me, little one—I'll think of something!"

"Yes," Betsy said, slowly, "I'm sure you will."

"But she was the one who had thought of something."

"I've got to targe off," Tim was saying. "See you tonight, I suppose . . ."

He was gone, then, and Betsy was left alone with her conscience. There was a brief, fierce struggle, and Betsy lost.

She walked with leaden feet to the telephone.

"Jane," she said, "I'm asking some of the crowd over tonight—just to dance to the gramophone, you know. The family's going to the cinema. And I wondered if—"

Betsy paused, and swallowed. "Well, would you like to bring Andrea Loring?"

Presumably in her right mind, she had made this tremendous sacrifice to the career

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gutters of the city ran fetlock deep in blood. And then around the holy places — and around the worldly princes so easily turned politicians again — an empire was founded: men who were only mortal found opportunities for wealth far beyond what they had left mortgaged at home.

With the commerce of the East in saffron and ivory and wrought vessels of gold and bales of precious stuffs came the East's gorgeousness of living — for the nobles. And the fierce, simple dream was dimmed; fighting men were mired down in silks and luxury and whispering intrigues.

But the consecration burned on in Christendom at large, so that during the decades of intermittent ferocious warring wave after human wave came out from Europe, fighters and pilgrims, but the great leaders of the First Crusade were sleeping in their tombs—Bohemund and Godfrey, Raymond and Baldwin, who was the first king of Jerusalem.

The successive generations of Frankish rulers and nobles in the Holy Land dwindled in personal force; because of lavish Eastern living in a hot climate too many of them died too young, and their mothers and wives were often more adroit in political intrigues.

There arose almost from ob-

Continuing . . . Perilous Sanctuary

(from page 15)

scurity among the Seljuk Turks the greatest fighter Islam ever had. He was Salah-ed-din Yusuf ibn Ayub, called Saladin. Through cool palaces and through squalid sun-baked alleys ran the awful rising matter of the jihad, the holy war, and the curved Damascus blades were riding through slaughter towards Jerusalem.

Iron-faced Knights Templars, overborne by howling numbers, were brought into camp and in one contemptuous sentence asked the question which the Mohammedan faith strictly required—would the captured enemy recant his Christianity and acknowledge Allah, or would he die?

To a man, the kneeling captured Templars answered as contemptuously, to be instantly beheaded. And in 1187 the roar of Islam swept over Jerusalem, retaking the city which held places sacred to the Saracens too.

From Norway to the streets of Rome an answer swept Christendom—not a roar, but a profound humility which was even more terrible. Europe had sinned. Wealth and a worldly kingdom had been made around the holy places.

News travelled so slowly it

took nearly two years for the flame of the Third Crusade to weld Europe whole again, but the roads were astray. And the Lion Heart was riding out of Aquitaine with England at his back.

In the travelling dust cloud of that mailed and glittering army Hugh had campaigned in the dry lands beyond the seas—for something which, for him, became dimmer and more confused as the months of fighting passed. They had their victories, but they did not reach Jerusalem. Even on the roads the stately squabbling of the princes had started again.

The long Norman shields from England fought battles that became a legend of fear throughout all Islam. But the brawling Richard, hampered and frustrated by smoother politicians—at least he thought he was—let the flame die out in smoldering disgust. He sold the island of Cyprus and started for home.

Hugh's best remembrances were of battle, not the pageantry of royal camps. In the tumult and crash of combat, with death as near as the next bitter blow of a scimitar, he

sometimes had an exalted glimpse of what he sought.

But it was still a lordly vision, thought of in terms of pride and chivalric glory. And the Third Crusade was dwindling off in fatality and deep human failure. All the pride and courage of this world had not been enough.

Standing in the darkness this Christmas Eve, keeping watch over these humble people, mother and child, Hugh felt the arrogant pride of strength drain out of him. His sword, too, with all the rest, had cut its way only to failure.

The child stirred in its sleep and the mother murmured softly. And Hugh was thinking no longer as a baronial knight. He had gone back to the time when he too was a child. He was remembering the gentle heart of a little boy listening to the story of Bethlehem. For a strange moment he thought now that he was just about to realise something, to find some profound and simple answer . . .

And then he heard muffled hoofbeats somewhere off in the night. They came steadily nearer, a small cavalcade, until he could hear the jingling of bit chains. For the space of a



long-held breath Hugh thought they might be going by, but they stopped, with an uneasy tramping on the sodden dead leaves of the road.

Racing for his shield where it leaned just inside the door, Hugh thought sickeningly of the distance to his horse—and the horse unsaddled. He had done as wisely as he knew how, craftily weighing the relative dangers. But campaign craft had failed him this time.

With his shield solidly on his left arm he was planted in the darkness of the doorway, wide-footed, his fighter's head thrust forward a little, waiting.

Two men had dismounted and were coming towards the door. Two others were still in their saddles, holding the reins, all four horses bunched restlessly. At an aloof twenty paces or so from them, a fifth man sat watching on a larger and finer horse.

The two men coming towards the door were near enough so that Hugh could see they were dirty and greasy-looking, thickly brutal of face and hands. The man sitting on the big horse with his cloak thrown open seemed to have on a shirt of rich new mail, because its broad breast gleamed liquidly in a ray of moonlight.

Hugh heard the woman rustling softly somewhere close behind him in the darkness, stealing nearer with the child. Making a quick backward motion with his right hand to stop her, Hugh walked out of the doorway into the shadowy light.

At sight of the tall silent figure in the white surcoat and with the long shield, the two men who were coming towards the chapel halted in their tracks. In the sudden hush, paralysing like a horror-dream, Hugh heard a random clank of rusty metal, the creaking of a saddle girth.

That unearthly pause lasted for four or five more of his heartbeats, unexpectedly long. Then in small, shy ways everything started moving again.

The two dismounted marauders, keeping their eyes on Hugh, began drifting closer together on slow-circling feet, as if seeing maybe richer but more dangerous loot than they had come hunting for.

The pair waiting on horseback dropped the reins of the two empty-saddled horses, letting them wander off an uncertain step or two.

A sword, covertly drawn, glittered dully once; and then stupidly was held out of sight on the far side of a saddle.

But the massively fleshed man in mail and furred cloak halted blandly enough: "Are there any other travellers here?"

"You mean, have I my men with me?" Hugh said. "Surely an ugly question to ask after a weapon has been drawn. Come and find out."

That stopped them once more, but only for a minute. Hopelessly, Hugh realised that pretending this bold and insolent front was not going to help him any.

"Whistle your men up, then, for me to see," came a deep-growing jeer from the road.

"We are after a runaway woman. This looks a better place to search than many we have visited tonight. Stand aside, you! It is a private quarrel."

So this was the Red Boar. Hugh tried to take his measure at this distance, among the shadowy play of the forest's tossing branches. He could see only indistinctly. But there was enough windy moonlight for him to fight by.

"I will take the quarrel," Hugh said quietly. And he knew he was speaking to brutish death itself.

Without any signal the two nearer footpads flung themselves upon him, and at the same instant there was an abrupt thudding scramble of boots coming in fast from the road.

He was caught alone and on foot and poor. But the great Norman sword, the blade of the crusaders, was out of its scabbard. And Hugh was backing, fighting step by rearward step, to the door of the chapel again.

Almos, immediately he had a fair chance to kill one of the two robbers who were crowding in first. But he needed them on their feet for a while. Because in their avid attack they were a screen, a clogging screen, between him and the horsemen thundering down upon him.

So instead of killing when he could Hugh took a mighty swing at the man's crude Saxon shield. With a shock which jarred his own right arm to the shoulder the broad blade hit the top of the upflung shield, biting down through leather and splintering wood as far as the upper of the iron straps which bound it together.

The fellow reeled sidewise and back, while Hugh's own shield buffeted away an axelike blow from the second man's sword. But the man with the broken shield—he was staggering right across the plunging forelegs of an advancing horse.

He went down in a clattering tangle of arms and legs and hoofs, and the horse pitched forward, shoulderwise, trampling horribly to keep its footing.

As the rider was slung violently to one side and almost down, clawing for balance, Hugh took two quick steps and the whirling, shining arc of his blade bit again, just under the edge of the rider's helmet.

That one never knew when his shoulders hit the ground, nor that the maddened horse dragged him heavily bumping away by one foot caught twisted in a stirrup.

But the trampled bravo among the weeds was still screaming hoarsely, a little. Hugh found that his ankle-length surcoat was awkward for fighting on foot. Its hem kept catching on his spurs.

Another rider had wrenched his horse aside from that instant melee, hauling it back on its haunches. Hugh started for him, but there was not time enough. He had to clash

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Continuing . . . Helpless Little Thing

(from page 39)

of Tim Hammond. Nevertheless, she was by no means prepared for the effect Andrea Loring could achieve with a few yards of black silk jersey and six ropes of pearls. Certainly Andrea wasn't like anybody who had ever come to dance in the Sayres' sitting-room.

Betsy's other guests, not many seasons out of school, eyed her in secret awe and amazement. She was the sort of girl to make other girls feel they had bought their clothes in a bargain basement—one day when they were in a hurry. The boys turned red when she looked at them and gawgled nervously. But the worst moment was approaching . . .

"Andrea," said Betsy, "this is Tim Hammond. You two should have a lot in common—both of you being in the artistic world, sort of."

Andrea gave Tim an enchanting smile. "Oh? Are you an artist?"

Tim had much more aplomb than the other young men—a fact which made Betsy both miserable and proud.

"I'm trying to be an artist," he was saying, his brown eyes very eager and warm. "Would you like to pose for me?"

"I'd love it!" cried Andrea. "When?"

Betsy wanted to move away. It was like watching her own fast destruction. But she was incapable of either speech or movement.

"Well," Tim said, "as soon as you can manage it, Andrea. To tell you the truth, I'm trying to get a batch of stuff ready for a new magazine."

"The magazine wouldn't be 'Swift,' would it?"

"Why, yes!"

"Then you can relax, Tim. Colin Norris is my uncle."

Now, at last, Betsy moved away, unable to bear Tim's exclamations of astonishment and delight. The rest of that evening was a nightmare in which she moved round with drinks and sandwiches and walnut cake.

Most of the guests were dancing, but Tim was solely concerned with new poses for Andrea. He just wanted to get ideas, he explained. So Andrea looked up from a book with a pleased expression; she leaned nonchalantly against a door; she sat at the piano and sent her wistful gaze into space.

Each pose was more ravishing than the one that had gone

before. She was, the ideal model, according to Tim, and all too evidently she shared his eagerness for their first appointment.

Betsy knew what was going to happen next. Even so, it was very hard to look bright and happy when she heard Tim offering to take Andrea home.

Andrea was smiling at her hostess. "It's been a wonderful evening," she said. "I've had such fun with Tim—and I'm going to look after him, you wait and see!"

"Isn't that wonderful of her?" Tim demanded.

"Oh, it certainly is!" cried Betsy. "Oh, I knew you two would like each other! I must be psychic, I think . . ."

By the time the family came home she had stopped crying, but her eyes were still red. Her mother had come into her bedroom and quietly closed the door. "What's wrong, Betsy?"

"Nothing! Nothing at all!" "Now, darling, you may as well tell me and get it over," her mother smiled faintly. "In my own peculiar, elderly way I'm rather fond of you, you know."

Betsy bit her lip. "Tim. Another girl. It's the end, that's all."

Betsy's mother was not one to need a three-volume novel when a sentence could suffice.

"Well, better for it to happen quickly, dear, than just drag along."

"I suppose so." Again Betsy coped with her lip, which was trembling. She went on hastily.

"See, it likes you!"



"And there's one good thing, Mother! This other girl can do a lot for Tim. She's awfully rich and important."

"Does he know that?"

"He couldn't help knowing!"

"Well, he's a very sensible young man. He knows which side his bread is buttered. But do you admire him very much for it, Betsy?"

"Oh, it isn't that! She's beautiful, too!"

Marcia shook her head unhappily.

"You mean that anything Tim does is right—because he does it?"

"Yes! And please stop trying to influence me, Mother! I'll never stop loving Tim! Not as long as I live!"

"Oh, I wish you will, dear. I'm sure I hope you—why, it's raining! On a clear night like this! Oh, no—it's a hailstorm!"

But the storm was confining its attack to one window. Betsy hurried across the room. "It's Tim, Mother! Standing down there, throwing stones or something!"

"Well, for heaven's sake wait a minute! You can't so down like that! Betsy!"

But Betsy, with a coat thrown over her little checked pyjamas, was already on her way. She snapped on the light and opened the door, and Tim came hurrying in like a large, happy puppy.

"Couldn't wait till morning! But I couldn't tell you the big news with all those others about. Guess what!"

"Andrea's got you the job?"

"Of course not! I got the job myself! This afternoon. Walked right into the place and sent in a drawing instead of a

card—wasn't that bright of me?"

"Oh, yes! Terribly bright of you!"

He paused a moment, frowning reflectively. "I think I must have picked up that idea somewhere . . . but it just seemed to hit me out of the blue!"

"And Mr. Norris liked your work?"

"He's delighted with it! I'm in!"

Betsy drew a long breath. "And what," she asked, "does Andrea think?"

"How do I know? I didn't tell her. I let her think she could help me, and I took her home and all that, because a man's got to be polite to his boss's relatives. Rule Number One. But I'd naturally want to break a piece of news to my old friends first!"

"But you wanted to draw Andrea! You thought she was beautiful!"

He nodded. "That girl," he said solemnly, "has a remarkable bone structure. I certainly want to draw her. But between you and me, Betsy, I can't stand a bossy female. A man doesn't like a girl who does things for him!"

Betsy's heart—which had zoomed up like a small aeroplane—suddenly sank in her breast.

"Oh! I hadn't realised—" "Well, it's a fact! It's in a man's nature to want to do everything for himself, and it gives him a life if he's got some girl who depends on him—who's just a helpless little thing—"

Tim stopped short. He had been about to light a cigarette but now he waved out the match. He stared at her. "Why, I mean a girl like you, Betsy!"

"Like me?"

"Exactly like you!" He was still staring at her, but in his eyes a remarkable new light was dawning. "Well, am I the blindest chap in the world? I have suddenly understood that I have not been coming over here all this time just for the coffee, Betsy!"

A man had never had less trouble taking a girl in his arms.

"So," he said, "you'll be married to an important artist on 'Swift.' And you'll not have a care in the world. Just take it easy—and never try to do anything for me, will you, sweetheart?"

Betsy did not let him see her smile.

"No, darling," she said. "Not any more than usual."

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NOT HALF-SAFE



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Continuing . . . Perilous Sanctuary

from page 40

shield to shield with the remaining outlaw afoot.

In straining, jabbing close quarters, too close for full sword work, Hugh glanced once past the man's horrified face.

The local lord and bully of Shadford was still hanging back on the road, holding in his horse with tight reins. He was leaning forward, watching.

That one glimpse was all Hugh could afford. The man with whom he was fighting was forcing Hugh into a slow half turn.

Hugh heard the other rider recovering and whirling his horse in towards the fight.

In what might be his last-breath gamble, Hugh swung his sword arm up as if for a desperate and hopeless—full cut, and he saw the man's eyes bulge and then squint as he came in for a short, quick kill. But, instead, Hugh's fist drove the pommel of his sword smashing into the stubbled, gaping face.

It was a Saracen scimitar trick, and it worked. So Hugh was in midstrike, turning, stepping clear. And it was too late.

The breathing bulk of horse and rider was towering over him, on his right side. He could not get his shield up and around in time.

The rider was twisting in his saddle, his whole upper body swinging over half sidewise to deliver the blow. Hugh saw the speed-blurred glitter of the blade coming down, and thought what a strange, anonymous way to have offered up his life, after all — this obscure and unrecorded end to all his pride.

Nothing could save him from an end as lonely as his prayer had been—and yet, as the blow came down, the horse was sliding out one hoof to balance the leaning weight of its rider.

Just enough so that its moving flank bumped Hugh's right arm and shoulder a scant few inches out of line. With a clang the sword struck and flashed away wildly, obliquely, above his dark-struck eyes.

Even as his knees went out from under him, Hugh blindly turned enough to take the top point of his broken helmet across the horse's nervous flank, sending it into a startled, hard-digging jump away from him.

And Hugh was still alive, and dragging his way back to the chapel door. With a groping scrape of the sword hilt, his right fist found the doorstep.

Then he was hauling himself to his feet again, sick and spent, leaning for a moment's peace against the rough stone of the entranceway. His clearing eyes began to see the rider fighting his unruly horse into a savage turn to come back.

The man afoot was up on one knee, ready to lurch in again. And on the road the Red Boar was sinking his spurs cruelly deep for a finishing charge.

Hugh's sword was slowly coming up, almost ready for the last time—the sword which had fought in noble company for a princely cause, the sword which had been held up in its golden cruciform of gilt before the eyes of the dying among the drifting dust of battle on the desert. That, to him—the belief in fading eyes gazing upon the sword cross—had always seemed a lonely miracle.

Humbly, he thought that perhaps if he had been a better man some great miracle might occur to help him now.

Then he heard the low cry of a child in fear. And once more Hugh walked out into the wind and the moonlight.

They were coming in fast, the three of them; and out of nowhere came the knowledge that when a man makes the deciding fight of his life he must always be alone.

From the first crash of final combat Hugh was fighting unto the death not for himself,

not even for the woman, but for an unknown child.

It was that in his mind, somehow. He did not know why. And the sword of the crusaders was singing in his hand at last as its blade rang on duller iron.

The robber afoot was down again. Hugh partly side-stepped the rider who had nearly killed him, took a wildly swinging blow on his shield, and, in passing, touched the horse with his sword point, enough to throw it plunging out of control again.

He was now heading out to meet the Red Boar. As the big charger came pounding down upon him, Hugh let his shield slip off his left arm.

With all his force he hurled it at the galloping forelegs. This horse was powerful and trained in fighting, but he tumbled once. It enabled Hugh to take the maimed weight of the Red Boar's sword on his own blade, parrying it ringingly off above his head.

And Hugh's left hand was clamped on a thick mailed ankle, jerking it out of the

When Hugh went back into the chapel the woman came towards him, weeping. Hugh waved her into silence. He was hammered almost unto death and he wanted no thanks.

He gently took the child from her and stood looking down at that new little face, as new and eternal as life would always be. From his forehead one drop of his blood fell and spread like the petals of a flower, like an offering, on the breast of the baby's white garments.

The lines of Hugh's scarred cheek deepened a little in a faraway smile, and he put the child back in the mother's arms. Then he went out and brought in his shield.

He laid it face down on the floor behind the altar and spread the blanket in its hollow inner curve. He motioned the woman that it was ready to cradle the child.

At its head he thrust the point of his sword into a crack between two stones, and it stood wedged there strong and upright.

Taking off his surcoat, he stretched it from the golden

Beauty in brief:

HOT WEATHER TIPS

By CAROLYN EARLE

ATTENTION to small grooming details enables you to maintain a spruce, serene look in melting weather.

- Once over lightly is the rule of comfortable summer make-up. Make-up should be completely removed and re-done at least once during the day. Ensure against a shiny red face that looks hot by wearing make-up base that covers well but thinly and withstands moisture.
- Hair hanging round the neck looks untidy and feels hot. Keep it brushed up away from the neck, or cut short; have it thinned out. Shampoo more often.
- Dab your neck every now and then with cologne, skin freshener, or plain cold water. If you have cologne, splash a bit of it on wrists, palms, and elbows.
- When feet get hot and tired, you will find that a soaking in a weak solution of soda and hot water relieves them; a quick rub with methylated spirit and a dusting with boracic powder has a toning-up effect.

stirrup. He hung on, and, digging in his heels, sagged backward with all his own weight as the charger went past.

A final sinew-tracking wrench and the Red Boar came down. Hugh was upon him, while the horse went veering away at a gallop.

Hugh kicked the man's sword to one side, then kicked the man himself into rolling half over on his back. He did not bother to stoop to tear the helmet off. He merely let the fleshy throat feel the sword point lightly, lightly.

"Stop your men," Hugh said. There was only one left to stop.

As the big man raised one hand feebly, the remaining rider reined in his horse. The man afoot was crawling away.

For a moment Hugh stood looking down at the gross, stunned face. It was evil, but only one sweating lump of the evil of the world.

And Hugh lifted his sword-point from that throat. Because for him, as he had offered his own life, had been forged the greatest weapon in the world—the terrible, humble heart of understanding.

"Get up," he said wearily. "I'm not going to kill you."

The bully did not believe him, but Hugh prodded him not gently to his feet.

"I'll not stain a good sword with you," Hugh said. "Besides, I want you to live and remember. There are other men like me. Always, somewhere. Live and be afraid."

With the flat of his sword he whipped the Red Boar out of the chapel yard.

Hugh watched him weave along the road. Then he jerked his head at the other rider, who rode off into the woods.

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person who mentions golf gets slugged. Why don't you forget it?"

"See here. If I want—" "Okay," she said. "You make it right with Mr. Jameson and I'll see what I can do. The only reason I'm doing this is that after we have spent a few days together I hope you'll notice some of my sterling virtues."

"Frankly, I think you're quite a man. You're good-looking, have a little coin of the realm, and you're big enough to carry me over the threshold. But a bit stuffy and inclined to blow a fuse over strange blondes."

"Just stick to golf," Johnny mumbled; "never mind the rest. As I said before, let the men do the pursuing."

"Be feminine and mysterious. Sure. The trouble is, people are always looking over the top of my head. Us little people have to blow our own horns."

"For instance, I can cook, type, my teeth are good, I can face the milkman in the morning without a paint job, I like dogs and cats, and I can make my own clothes. Those are just a few of my assets. If you'd care to take me to dinner, I can go into—"

Johnny sighed. "All right. You have to eat, I have to eat, but, for heavens sake, let us confine the conversation to golf, logging, Russia, or the latest film. You embarrass me, and, furthermore, I believe you're bluffing. If I made a pass at you, you'd run as fast as a kid coming home from school."

"Try me," she said.

"Where would you like to eat?" "They have barbecued steaks at the Copper Room. They have dim lights and a three-piece orchestra. Maybe I can dig an off-the-shoulder cotton out of the back of my closet, tucked in beside some old putters."

"Do that," Johnny said. "I'll borrow a car from Howard. Pick you up around seven?"

She gave him her address and left.

When he rang her doorbell at seven that evening, he was completely unprepared for her. She was wearing an off-the-shoulder cotton which flared here and clung there, tiny high-heeled shoes which lifted her a good two inches.

She seemed as fragile as a china doll, and it was almost impossible to realize that this was the little creature who could hit a tee shot over two hundred yards. She picked a coat off the stair railing and handed it to Johnny, who held it while she slipped into it.

He found himself unaccountably shy. He could not reconcile this sleek young thing with the fresh boyden of the afternoon.

"Something wrong?" she asked.

"No," Johnny said. "I just find it hard to realise that you can hit a golf ball so far."

"I leave my muscles in the top drawer when I go out in the evening."

"I tried to pay you a compliment," Johnny said stiffly.

"Why, that's very nice of you," she said. "Thank you."

Johnny frowned and helped her into the car. On the way to the Copper Room, she sat over in one corner of the car and said nothing. Johnny could think of nothing to say.

When they got there, she told Johnny what she wanted to eat and then looked around her. She waved to two young men seated near them and smiled. She looked the other way and lifted her hand to a young man sitting alone. He immediately came to the table.

"Hi, Sally," he said.

Sally smiled and indicated Johnny. "Mr. Blake, Mr. Vardon."

Mr. Vardon nodded at Johnny. "Where've you been, kitten?" he said. "I tried to call twice last week."

"Here and there, Eddie," she said.

Continuing . . . Target For Matrimony

from page 13

"Be home tomorrow?" She nodded. "Give me a ring."

Mr. Vardon left the table. The two young men whom she had first waved at came over.

They both said hello and wondered where she had been lately.

"Mr. Blake, Mr. Carter and Mr. Downing."

Mr. Carter and Mr. Downing shook hands with Johnny. They had missed her, they said. They wanted to know when they could see her. They suggested a fishing trip on the Columbia River, and she said to get in touch.

The waitress brought a crab cocktail and Sally attacked it hungrily. Two more young men came into the Copper Room, saw Sally, and stopped at the table. During the salad, three young men spotted her from the bar, left their drinks, and came over to visit.

Finally, Johnny said, "What is this—Old Home Week?" "What's the matter?"

"Hello, kitten," Johnny mimicked. "Mr. Carter, Mr. Downing, Mr. Vardon, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Brown. I'm not on a dinner date. I'm putting on a convention."

"For a man who screamed his head off when I sandbagged you into taking me to dinner, you're acting a bit jealous."

"I am not jealous," Johnny said. "I merely would like to eat my dinner without a constant stream of young men leering at you."

"They aren't leering. They're old friends."

"Don't you have any enemies?" Johnny mumbled. Finally he said, "Would you like to dance? Our steaks aren't ready yet."

Sally shrugged. "If you'd like."

"Well, don't, if you don't want to," Johnny growled.

"I don't mind," Sally said. On the dance floor, Sally tucked herself into Johnny's arms and then looked up at him. Her lips were only inches from his.

He trembled, for some reason which he could not at the moment fathom, and his legs felt weak. Having such a tiny yet solid thing in his arms was, he realised, an exhilarating experience, and he was quite unprepared for his reaction.

When they walked off the dance floor at the end of the dance, he was somewhat confused. He had been talking into taking a fresh young thing out to dinner. What he took out to dinner was a lithe, lovely young lady with beautiful shoulders who apparently had gobs of young men standing around wondering how they could get together with her. She showed no signs of being impressed with Johnny.

When they got back to the table, he said, "Look, Sally, you gave me the impression that various young men were only interested in you as a golfing wizard and that when you were off the golf course they lost interest."

"Wherever in the world did you get that idea?" she said.

Johnny stared at her. "Listen, today you said that you wanted to get married but that all the men only wanted you to show them how you got all that distance—"

"You're exciting yourself, Johnny," she said.

"You said that you were trying to be ladylike and glamorous, but that when you put on an off-the-shoulder dress men asked if you had indigestion."

"I said that?"

"Certainly you said that."

She put her chin on one hand and leaned forward. "And what's your problem, Johnny?"

"My problem is trying to figure how your mind works."

"Well, good luck with it."

The waitress put two steaks

in front of them, and, after they had eaten, Johnny drove her home. He found that he was somehow angry with her, as if he had been cheated.

They stopped in front of her house and she said, "Thank you for dinner, Johnny. Did you have any luck?"

"Luck?"

"Figuring out how my mind works. You said you were trying."

"No."

"That's too bad," she said kindly, "but keep trying."

"What time would you like to start the lessons tomorrow?" he said grumpily.

"Oh, I don't know. It doesn't matter."

"It does to me," he growled. "That's right," she said.

"For a moment I almost forgot the glamorous Gloria."

"Eleven o'clock be all right?" he said.

"I guess so," she said vaguely. She put her hand on the door handle.

Johnny was reluctant to have her leave, but he could think of no good reason for retaining her. "I find myself wishing that the evening wasn't over," he said.

"Careful," she said. "Don't get carried away, Johnny."

She hit the door handle and left the car.

then he went up to the pro shop and asked Sally's father if she had been around. The little man said that she hadn't. He walked around the clubhouse and out on to the first tee, where there was a crowd watching the contestants.

He saw Gloria Reynolds tee off, and contemplated following her around again, but instead he went back hopefully to the practice tee.

By one o'clock he was seething, took his clubs back into the pro shop, changed clothes, ate lunch, and thought of the things he would say to Sally when he saw her.

After lunch he looked up Howard Jameson. "Seen Sally?" he asked.

Howard shook his head. "She was supposed to give me a lesson at eleven," Johnny wrumbled.

"Well, she's the unpredictable type," Howard said. "Want me to give you one?"

"No," Johnny said. "I made a deal with Sally. She acted very peculiar last night, as a matter of fact. Acted as if she were doing me a favor going to dinner with me."

"That so? Maybe she was."

"I'm not that bad," Johnny said gloomily.

"You sure?"

"Yes, I'm sure!" Johnny said. He walked away.

As he dressed for his dinner

On the way to the Copper Room, Johnny listened glumly while she gave him a stroke-by-stroke replay of her match. Johnny barely refrained from yawning.

When they walked into the Copper Room, Johnny looked around and his blood pressure rose.

Seated at the table with four young men was Sally, wearing another off-the-shoulder cotton which, he presumed, she had dug out from under some old putters. She saw them come in, waved, smiled, and then turned her attention to her escorts.

So now she had them in fours, he thought. She had really fed him a bill of goods. So all she wanted was to get married, but the men just wanted to know how she got distance off the tee.

Ha. Trying to be more ladylike and glamorous, she said. Well, she was sure giving it the old college try. Sally was obviously having a wonderful time, completely forgetting, Johnny thought gloomily, that she had stood him up this morning.

Then he heard Gloria say, "Are you listening?"

"Huh?" He turned towards her. "Certainly. What was it you said?"

"You're staring at Sally as if she had green hair or something."

"I was?"

"Men to the right of her," Gloria said. "Men to the left of her. I don't know how she does it. Or how she's escaped being married before this."

Johnny gave a slight leap. "Married? She's thinking of getting married?"

"Who doesn't?" Gloria said. "The music sounds good."

Johnny stood up and they went on to the dance floor. He was mildly surprised to notice how tall Gloria was as she danced with him, and he couldn't help but compare Sally's daintiness with Gloria's generous proportions, and, since she had a tendency to lead him on the dance floor, he was relieved when the music stopped.

During dinner she discussed the overlapping grip, the reverse-overlap putting grip, the merits of the open and the closed stance, and explained the position of the right elbow at the top of the backswing.

Johnny said, "Uh-huh," and "Huh-uh," at the proper times, he hoped, and when, after dinner, she said that she'd have to get to bed early since she had to tee off at eight-fifteen, he heaved an almost audible sigh of relief.

He dropped her at her home, thanked her for going out with him, and hurried back to the Copper Room. Sally and her young men were lingering over coffee.

He matched over to the table and said, "I wonder whether I could pry Sally away long enough for a dance?"

The young men nodded and Sally got up. When he got her on the dance floor, he said, "And where were you at eleven o'clock?"

"Oh, that's right," she said vaguely. "We did have a golf lesson. I remember now."

"That's very kind of you," he said, "but a bit late."

"I forgot," she said.

"I suppose you were running around with all those young characters who were trying to make dates with you last night?"

"Why, Johnny," she said, "you're acting jealous again. For a man who is knocking himself out trying to learn golf to impress one dame, you're being very peculiar about another one."

"Never mind that," Johnny said. "Did you come with those young fellows?"

"No. I came over to drown my sorrows in steak, thinking



Johnny drove to his hotel, his feelings more tangled than a fishing-line after a backlash. He tried to remember that he was doing all this because he had seen Gloria Reynolds on the tee this morning.

When he got into bed he turned off the light and stared at the ceiling and realised, with a shock, that he could remember with almost mathematical exactness the appearance of Sally—her words, her gestures, the way she walked, and her smile.

He realised that he was looking forward to his golf lesson at eleven with more enthusiasm than he would have thought possible, and then said to himself, "This is ridiculous, Blake. This is just the result of coming out of the woods, being exposed to an off-the-shoulder dress, soft lights, a good steak, and the feeling of that little girl in your arms while you were dancing. Tomorrow you'll see her in the cold, clear light of day and she'll revert to what she is—a fresh youngster."

He waited until one o'clock. At eleven-thirty he had started looking at his watch,

date with Gloria he found himself stewing about Sally. She had a lot of nerve, he decided, standing him up, and when he saw her he would ignore her—pretend that he had never had a lesson date with her, or that he had ever had a dinner date, or had any feelings about her whatsoever.

Gloria was, Johnny decided, when she opened the door, still the best-looking girl he had seen in years or had possibly ever seen. She was wearing a black dress with a white collar and cuffs, and she was as lovely as a twenty-four-foot log.

Johnny hadn't remembered that she was as tall as she was, but that was probably because he had been with pint-sized Sally.

"I'm starved!" she said, as Johnny opened the car door. "I had to go twenty-one holes to beat Mrs. Bright, and didn't have time to eat afterwards."

"I had good food at the Copper Room last night," Johnny said. "That O.K.?"

She nodded. "Would you believe it? I had three-putted four greens. On the seventeenth I had to sink a twelve-foot putt to stay in. On eighteen—"

of you out with Gloria, and they at down with me. Why?"

"I would like to talk to you—in private," he said.

"My, you look solemn," he growled.

"Well, in that case, wait a minute while I get my coat."

She went back to her table, got her coat, said a few words to the four men, and came out into the lounge.

They went outside and got into Johnny's car. He said nothing until he had driven into the parking area of the country club and turned off the engine.

Then he thought of the things he wanted to say, but was afraid to say them. Finally, he blurted out, "Sally, something has come over me."

"It has?"

"I—I find that my attraction for Gloria has, on closer inspection, failed to develop. All she talks about is golf."

"What did you want her to talk about—logging?"

Suddenly he took a deep breath and said, "Sally, when I first met you, I thought you were a fresh young creature."

"I see."

"Nothing more than that. However, now I—I—"

He stared out through the windshield and then said, "I know I'm just a big, dumb logger and I haven't a chance, but I'm crazy about you. I guess I have been from the first, even though I didn't know it."

"You mean you're in love?" Sally said.

He nodded dumbly.

"Really in love, cross your heart and hope to die in love?"

"Yep," he said. "That's it, Sally."

"Wheel!" Sally yelled. She put her arms around his neck and kissed him heartily. Then she released him and yelled again, "It worked! Yippee!"

Johnny's brow became as wrinkled as a raisin. "What worked? And stop yelling."

"Be feminine, be mysterious, let the men pursue. Give 'em competition."

"What are you talking about?"

"You," she said. "I mean your sister. You told me how she trapped your brother-in-law."

He stared at her. "You mean—"

"Certainly," she said. "I didn't know how to go about it, so I talked it over with Gloria after I made the deal to give you lessons. She said to be elusive and—feminine."

You know—unpredictable. She also said she'd lend me some men to make a showing. She also said she'd cure you of her in a hurry. Nothing, she said, bores a man more than some woman yapping about her golf game hour after hour."

"Listen," Johnny said, dazed, "you mean all those young fellows coming to the table last night—tonight—were—"

"Gloria just passed the word around. They thought it was a sort of mean trick, but they said they'd play ball. I almost fractured my bank roll for those off-the-shoulder cottons, but I must say they do more for a girl than a golf jacket."

"But I thought Gloria—"

Johnny began.

"Oh, pool!" Sally said. "Gloria had her cap set for Howard Jameson for two years, but he's hard to catch. She'll nail him one of these days."

"Oh, brother!" Johnny moaned. "Women!"

She put her hand on his arm and said kindly, "I know, Johnny. I really shouldn't have told you, but, to tell the truth, I feel guilty about my unfair tactics. If it's any consolation, I was nuts about you from the moment you walked into the office."

"You were?" Johnny brightened.

"Simply nuts."

"I think that helps," Johnny said, puzzled, "although I'm not yet sure."

(Copyright)

* New Year Nations From Other Nations

Make your New Year menus different by trying popular recipes from other countries.

START with simple savory and sweet dishes made from familiar ingredients readily obtainable, then go on to more sophisticated recipes, training the family palate as you go!

The interesting dishes illustrated on this page were prepared and served during a Legacy All-Nations Fair held recently in Sydney.

Recipes are simple and easy to follow and are just the thing to start you off on an adventure into international cookery.

GRECIAN STUFFED TOMATOES

Three-quarters pound round steak (put through mincer at home), 1 medium onion, butter or substitute, 2 or 3oz. rice, 9 or 10 medium tomatoes, salt, pepper, pinch mixed dried herbs.

Wash and dry tomatoes, cut a slice from the top of each, scoop out the pulp. Lightly fry minced steak and chopped onion in butter or substitute. Add half the tomato pulp, washed rice, salt, pepper, and herbs. Cook gently, stirring frequently, for 15 minutes. Mixture must not be allowed to become dry. Fill into tomatoes, replace slice cut from top. Bake on greased tray in moderate oven until tomatoes are soft but not broken.

HUNGARIAN GOULASH

Two pounds meat cut from knuckles of veal or shins of beef, 1lb. onions, butter or substitute, 1 cup water, salt, pepper, paprika, 1 small green pepper, 2 tomatoes, small quantity flour (blended with milk or cream for veal, water for beef).

Cut meat into cubes. Slice or chop onions, cook in hot butter or substitute until golden-brown. Add 1 cup water, cover and cook until onions are tender. Add meat, season to taste with salt, pepper, and paprika. Dip tomatoes into boiling water, remove skins, cut into wedges. Remove seeds and stem from green pepper, slice finely, and add to meat with tomato wedges. Cover closely and simmer very gently until meat is tender, do not add any more water unless absolutely necessary. Thicken with blended flour before serving.

RICE MUTTA

(An appetising accompaniment to Veal Korma)

Two cups rice, 1lb. cooked peas, 1 medium-sized onion, about 4oz. butter, extra butter for frying.

Wash rice and boil until almost done. Fry onion, add to peas and rice, together with the 4oz. butter and salt to taste. Mix well and place in a warm oven for about 20 minutes.

Kartoffelsalat

Three pounds potatoes, 1 egg-yolk, salad or olive oil, vinegar, salt, pepper, French mustard, chives, parsley, dill (if possible), marjoram, capers (optional), veal stock, frankfurts or any cold meat or poultry.

Boil potatoes in their skins, skin while hot, and leave until quite cold. Cut into slices. New potatoes are best—and avoid over-cooking. Make a mayonnaise with egg-yolk and oil. Oil must be added very slowly, a drop at a time in the beginning. Season with salt, pepper, vinegar, and French mustard. Add finely chopped herbs and capers. Thin down with stock, mix carefully with potatoes without breaking potatoes. Leave salad 2 or 3 hours before serving, so that it absorbs moisture and flavoring of other ingredients.

Veal Korma

One pound veal steak, 2 medium potatoes, 1 medium onion, 1 cup tomato puree, 1 clove garlic, 2 heaped teaspoons curry powder, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon each green ginger and cinnamon, pinch cayenne pepper, butter for frying.

Slice and fry onion and garlic until soft. Add spices, fry over low heat for about 5 minutes, taking care mixture does not burn. Add tomato puree, cook 2 or 3 minutes. Add veal cut in small pieces, add little water, cover pan, allow to simmer for about 15 minutes. Cut each potato into four, add to mixture, and again cover. When potatoes are cooked, curry is ready. Gravy should be thick, but if too thick add a little more water.

The recipe for Rice Mutta, the traditional accompaniment for this dish, is in column 1.

Italian Salad

Two cooked beetroot, 6 boiled potatoes, 2 cooked carrots, 2 hard-cooked eggs, 1 cup cooked peas, 1 cup cooked beans, 1 finely chopped pickled onion, 3 finely cut olives, 6 anchovy fillets, 1 cup capers, 1 cup chopped prawns, 2 cups flaked steamed fish, olive oil, lemon juice, salt. Mayonnaise: Three raw egg-yolks, olive oil, lemon juice, salt.

Dice beetroot, potatoes, carrots, and hard-cooked eggs. Mix in peas, beans, onion, olives, finely cut anchovies, capers, prawns, and fish. Add sufficient oil (mixed with lemon juice to taste) to bind. Season with salt. Place in oblong tin, press down firmly, chill overnight. Beat egg-yolks for mayonnaise, add oil a little at a time; continue beating. When thick, add lemon juice and salt to taste. Chill. Unmould on to a flat dish, top with mayonnaise, decorate with prawns, slices of hard-cooked egg, tomato, and beetroot.

Zabaglione

Eight egg-yolks, 6 ounces sugar, sweet sherry or Marsala, 1oz. gelatine, 1 pint cream, two 6in. rounds plain sponge, little additional milk and sherry or Marsala.

Beat egg-yolks and sugar in large basin; to each egg-yolk add 2 tablespoons sherry, stand basin over (not in) boiling water, beat until mixture froths and thickens. Remove from heat, cool. Soften gelatine in a little sherry, dissolve over hot water. Cool, stir into cooled egg mixture. Fold in whipped cream. Line sides and base of deep basin with sponge; place a full circle of sponge on the base and arrange thin slices round the sides. Sprinkle cake with a mixture of milk and sherry, pour in cooled egg mixture. Cover top with slices of sponge, chill until set. Unmould when required, decorate as desired.



By Our Food & Cookery Experts



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This summer, get a smooth, healthy suntan the easy way—with Nyal Kwik Tan. Kwik Tan promotes suntans... prevents sunburn. Kwik Tan's scientific sunscreen filters out the burning rays of the sun and promotes a healthy, golden suntan in next-to-no time. All chemists. Cream, 2/6; Oil, 3/11.

**NYAL
KWIK TAN**

Duchess
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It's quite likely that you've never seen the beautiful Duchess of Exbury—even in an advertisement for a make-up cream. Her absence from the face-cream advertisements is solely due to the fact that Her Grace is far too modern to use any greasy face cream whatsoever. Never has she informed society that she uses Mercolized Wax. But the truth is happily apparent to the many other lovely women, young as well as not-so, who do exactly the same thing. Greasy skin foods are fantastically out of date. Mercolized Wax is non-greasy; vanishes as you smooth it on. It nourishes and cleanses. Overnight, after using Mercolized Wax, your skin becomes fresh and clear and glowing with life. Lines are smoothed out, wrinkles kept at bay. Overnight this astonishing cream works hard to achieve this miracle—the miracle of a flawlessly lovely complexion. Price, 4/6.

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**ASTHMA
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Don't let coughing, wheezing attacks of Asthma and Bronchitis poison your system, sap your energy, ruin your health, and weaken your heart. Mondaco, a new American scientific medicine, starts immediately to circulate through the blood, quickly curbing the attacks. The very first day, the thick phlegm is dissolved, giving free, easy breathing and setting you free the night through in comfort. Get Mondaco from your chemist, or store to-day under positive guarantee to stop your Asthma coughing and to give you free, easy breathing the first day or money back.

**WHEN KIDNEYS
WORK TOO OFTEN**

Are you embarrassed by too frequent urination during the day and night? These symptoms, at first so slender, irritate, ache, burn, swell, and sting. Leg Pains, Nervousness, Dizziness, Lambo, Bruised Sleep, Gravel, Urinary, are usually due to germ-caused kidney and bladder troubles. The first dose of Cystex, the new scientific medicine, goes right to work over-coming troubles in 3 days. 1. Kills germ causing trouble. 2. Gets rid of poisonous acids. 3. Strengthens and reinvigorates kidneys and bladder. Get Cystex from your chemist under guarantee, satisfaction or money back.

Prize chocolate pie is party sweet

This week's prizewinners are: Kentucky chocolate pie, piquant chops, luncheon mould, butterscotch cake.

THE Kentucky chocolate pie, which wins the main prize of £5, has two layers of filling. One is velvety chocolate, the other a fluffy rum-flavored cream. The pie is then topped with grated chocolate and decorated with whipped cream.

Served on special occasions, this pie will be sure to win you fame.

The luncheon mould, which wins a consolation prize, is served with crisp salad, and should be a boon for cold meals during holidays. It's simple to prepare and very tasty.

Oven-cooked piquant chops and a delicious butterscotch cake flavored with walnuts and topped with caramel icing also win consolation prizes.

All spoon measurements in our recipes refer to level spoons.

KENTUCKY CHOCOLATE PIE

One 8in. cooked biscuit pastry-case.

Chocolate Layer: One and a half cups milk, 2 egg-yolks, 1 cup sugar, 2½ teaspoons corn-flour, 4 teaspoons gelatine, 4 tablespoons cold water, 4 squares chocolate, 1 teaspoon vanilla.

Cream Layer: Two egg-whites, pinch cream of tartar, 1-3rd cup sugar, 2 teaspoons rum, whipped sweetened cream and grated chocolate.

Beat egg-yolks, add corn-flour and sugar, stir until smooth. Add warmed milk, stir over gentle heat until boiling, simmer 2 to 3 minutes. Cool slightly, stir in vanilla and gelatine softened in water. Melt chopped chocolate over boiling water, stir in half custard mixture. When cold and beginning to thicken, fill into pastry-case, chill until firm. Beat egg-whites to meringue consistency with cream of tartar and sugar. Fold in balance of custard flavored

with rum. Pour on to chocolate filling, chill until firm. Top with grated chocolate, decorate with whipped cream.

First Prize of £5 to Mrs. C. Dennis, Basildon Farm, Somerville, Vic.

BUTTERSCOTCH CAKE

Two ounces butter or substitute, 1 cup brown sugar, 1 egg, 1 cup self-raising flour, 1 cup milk, 1 teaspoon vanilla, 1 tablespoon golden syrup, pinch salt, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1 cup chopped walnuts.

Cream shortening and sugar. Add egg-yolk, mix well. Fold in sifted flour, salt, and cinnamon alternately with golden syrup mixed with milk and vanilla. Lastly fold in nuts and stiffly beaten egg-white. Fill into greased 7in. sandwich-tin, bake in moderate oven 30 to 35 minutes. Cool on cake-cooler, ice with caramel icing.

Note: Above mixture may be doubled and cooked in 8in. cake-tin 50 to 60 minutes.

Caramel Icing: One cup brown sugar, 1oz. butter, 1 cup milk, vanilla.

Place brown sugar, butter, and milk in saucepan, heat gently, stirring frequently until boiling. Remove spoon, cook 5 minutes. Cool slightly, add vanilla, beat until creamy, and beginning to thicken. Pour quickly over cake, as icing sets rapidly.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. E. O. Lane, 4 Granby Crescent, Nedlands, W.A.

LUNCHEON MOULD

One pound meat cut from shin of beef, 2 sheep's tongues, 1 small piece pickled pork, 1 knuckle veal (cut into 2 or 3 pieces), 1 teaspoon nutmeg, salt and pepper.

Gash meat on knuckle of veal. Wash tongues, place in large pan with chopped beef, pork, and veal knuckle. Half cover with water, bring to boiling point, cover tightly, simmer until quite tender (or pressure-cook 40 to 45 minutes). Remove skin from tongues, chop all meat finely, removing veal from knuckle.



KENTUCKY CHOCOLATE PIE looks good and tastes even better. You'll like the chocolate-rum flavor in the filling. See main prize-winning recipe on this page.

Skim fat from stock, strain, return to saucepan. Add meats, nutmeg, salt and pepper to taste. Boil gently 10 minutes, fill into wetted mould. Chill until firm, serve thinly sliced.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. F. M. White, Morven P.O., via Culcairn, N.S.W.

PIQUANT CHOPS

One and half pounds leg or neck mutton or lamb chops, 1 large onion, salt, pepper, 1 tablespoon flour, 1 dessertspoon sugar, 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce, 1 tablespoon vinegar.

Trim excess fat from chops, place in casserole with chopped onion. Season well with salt and pepper. Blend flour and sugar with Worcestershire sauce and vinegar, pour over chops. Add sufficient water to barely cover, cook in moderate oven 1 hour, or until chops are browned on top. Cover closely, cook further 1½ hours, adding a little more water if necessary. Serve topped with chopped parsley.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. P. M. McQueen, "Woolfield," Corfield, Qld.

Miss Precious Minutes Says:

AFTER using a tube of liquid glue, try inserting a drawing pin instead of an ordinary pin into the top. The flat top of the drawing pin is easier to remove when the glue is used again.

TO protect new cake-tins from rust rub over with a little lard and place in a moderate oven until the surplus grease is absorbed.

ALWAYS shrink petersham ribbon before using it as a backing for belts of washing frocks.

VEILING that has lost its crispness can be freshened by dipping in a solution of sugar and water. Allow a tablespoon of sugar to a pint of water; squeeze out moisture, then place the veiling between two sheets of waxed paper, and iron diagonally with a warm iron.

TO remove decorative transfers on canisters, walls or furniture, place wet cheesecloth over them for about an hour and they will lift off quite easily. Hold the cheesecloth in place with transparent adhesive tape.

Mothercraft

By SISTER MARY JACOB, Our Mothercraft Nurse

CAMPING is a healthy and popular recreation for families on the long summer holidays.

Parents should realise, however, that there are often problems associated with this type of holiday that must be considered if good health is to be maintained.

The water supply is important, and should be checked.

Water from wayside springs or creeks should not be used.

Should milk available not come up to the highest standard, or if regular supplies are not available, use powdered milk.

A wise choice of foods is also important. If the camping area is in the country, and dairies are well kept, eggs, milk, and cream from farms are ideal.

A leaflet dealing with this subject can be obtained from The Australian Women's Weekly Mothercraft Service Bureau, Box 4088, G.P.O., Sydney. Please send a stamped addressed envelope.



SMALL cup-hooks spaced evenly along the cross-bar of a wood-frame hanger are convenient holders for belts.

TO rejuvenate a shabby leather handbag or suitcase rub with a mixture of one part vinegar to two parts boiled linseed oil. When the mixture is absorbed into the leather polish with a soft cloth.

STORE left-over balls of wool in a large screw-top jar. The wool is kept clean, protected from moths, and the colors can be seen at a glance.

**THINK
TWICE!**

Use the only
deodorant with

**"Action Proof"
Protection**

Your most effective deodorant for checking perspiration and its offending odour. Because only Odo-Ro-No has this new "Action-Proof" formula! Vastly superior to anything you've ever seen before! Use Odo-Ro-No daily and be confident of complete 24-hour protection—no matter how active you are!



People on-the-go use

ODO-RO-NO

POSITIVELY

Most Effective!



You can't tell it
from fresh milk

All the nourishing goodness of milk from the lush Hunter Valley—all the vitamins and minerals—are retained in Oak Powdered Milk. Only the water is removed. For drinking, cooking, and every purpose. With Oak Powdered Milk in your pantry—you'll never run out of milk.



**OAK
POWDERED
MILK**

**SKIN ITCH
STOPS IN 7 MINUTES**

Don't let ugly, disfiguring Pimples, Eczema, Acne, Ringworm, Psoriasis, Blackheads or Itching, Cracking, Peeling, Burning Skin Troubles make life miserable and spoil your fun. Don't be embarrassed and feel inferior because of bad skin. Now every chemist has a new American Hospital Discovery called Nixaderm that stops the itch in 7 minutes, kills germs and fungus, and in 24 hours begins to heal the skin, clear, soft, and smooth. No matter how long you have suffered, get Nixaderm from your chemist to-day under positive guarantee to heal your skin or money back.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY—December 30, 1953



AMUSING FARMYARD ANIMALS and gay figures of children are a special feature of American Vogart Transfer Pattern No. 145 "Down on the Farm." More than 40 motifs are on the transfer sheet, which measures 24in. x 28in., and simple embroidery stitches are used in the designs. Patterns are available from our Needlework Department. Price, 2/-. For address, see page 47.

English home has colorful history

● For more than 400 years the picturesque, vine-clad home of Sir John and Lady Charrington at Charlwood, Surrey, England, has been known as "Tifter's Farm."

PART of the house dates back to Saxon times, when it was supposedly a monastery. Alterations and additions were made during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

Years of neglect followed, and eventually the house was condemned.

Lady Charrington told me that Sir Gerald Chichester, one-time secretary to the late Queen Mary, bought "Tifter's Farm" just before the war. He spent thousands of pounds on its restoration, but lived to enjoy only a year's residence.

The Charringtons then took over the place and some of the furnishings.

Beautiful tapestries, gifts from Queen Mary to her former secretary, still decorate a seat and a divan in the drawing-room.

Queen Mary admired "Tifter's Farm," especially the gardens and trees round the house itself.

The pond is full of carp, the first of which, according to legend, was placed there when the farm was a monastery. Another survival of the old days is the well. This has a circular top and can be seen through the dining-room window illustrated at the foot of the page.

—EVE GYE.



REAR TERRACE at "Tifter's Farm." Lady Charrington entertains visitors Sir Angus and Lady Gillan, who spent several years in Australia and now live at Leigh, Surrey.



ABOVE: View of the carp-filled pond at "Tifter's Farm," the fascinating old home of Sir John and Lady Charrington, at Charlwood, Surrey, England. According to legend the first carp were placed in the pond in early Saxon times.

RIGHT: Beautifully kept lawns, gardens, and trees are a feature of centuries-old "Tifter's Farm." The central section of the house dates back to Saxon times.



LEFT: Long drawing-room has chalk-white walls and sea-green curtains trimmed with gold braid. Easy chairs are in off-white brocade satin. Cabinets hold family heirlooms, including the 350-year-old baby shoes of one of the French Huguenots, an ancestor of Lady Charrington, who was smuggled into England in a basket by his nurse in the year 1585.



ABOVE: The hall, which has chalk-white walls and a stone floor dating back to the Saxon era. The oak table is mellow with age and still carries the marks of a butcher's chopper. The Windsor chairs were made in the reign of Charles II. priceless pieces of china decorate the old mantelpiece, and old lanterns are used as ceiling lights. At left is the dining room, in which the medieval-styled wallpaper has a flower pattern, and the floor is covered by a rich Eastern rug. The butler has set the table for lunch.

Mandrake the Magician

MANDRAKE: Master magician, rushes to a rooftop to prevent a group of gamblers from shooting.

LOTHAR: His giant Nubian servant, who is playing in a decisive professional football match. Overpowered by the gunmen, Mandrake gestures hypnotically and disarms them. Meanwhile, **PRINCESS NARDA:** Tells Lothar what is happening. He leaves the game to help Mandrake turn the criminals over to the police, and then decides he has had enough football. **NOW READ ON:**

BEGINNING: TABOO LAND

AT THE EXPLORERS' CLUB--

MANDRAKE, CAN YOU COME TO THE CLUB AT ONCE? HURRY, PLEASE.

I WANT A PROFESSIONAL EXPLORER FOR THIS JOB, NOT A STAGE MAGICIAN!

MANDRAKE'S THE CLEVEREST MAN I KNOW, MR. BUCKS. YOU'LL SEE.

GOOD NIGHT!

I CAME IN A HURRY--AS YOU ASKED, ARCHER.

Humph! I TOLD YOU I WANT AN EXPLORER, NOT A TRICKSTER, ARCHER!

WAIT! MANDRAKE, MR. BUCKS WISHES TO FINANCE AN EXPEDITION TO TABOO LAND. WHERE IS THAT?

DEEP IN THE ANDES--ONE OF THE FEW LARGE UNEXPLORED AREAS ON EARTH--A LAND OF MYSTERY--EVEN NATIVES LIVING ON THE EDGE ARE AFRAID TO ENTER...

AND MANDRAKE'S THE BEST MAN FOR THIS JOB, BUCKS.

WAIT, I HAVEN'T SAID I WANTED IT. WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT?

IT'S ABOUT A ONE-MILLION DOLLAR CHANCE, SIR.

--IT'S ABOUT A WHITE QUEEN OF TABOO LAND--AND ABOUT THIS LITTLE GIRL--

Hmm--SOUNDS INTERESTING. NATURALLY, I DON'T UNDERSTAND, YET. MIND EXPLAINING IT ALL TO ME?

THIS IS A PICTURE OF MY GRANDDAUGHTER, DIANE, TAKEN FIFTEEN YEARS AGO. A FEW DAYS BEFORE SHE SAILED WITH MY SON AND HIS WIFE--TO FIND TABOO LAND.

"MY ONLY SON WAS AN EXPLORER. I WAS AGAINST HIS TAKING THE CHILD ON THE TRIP. --BUT HE INSISTED--I NEVER SAW THEM AGAIN--"

TO BE CONTINUED

TEENA *by Linda Terry*

DADDY, WHY CAN'T I HAVE A MOTOR BIKE?...JUST THINK... YOU'D GAVE SO MUCH MONEY ON SHOES FOR ME...

SPEAKING OF GIVING, YOUNG LADY, I GON'T IT TIME YOU LEARNED HOW TO GET THE THINGS YOU WANT?... MOTOR BIKES DON'T GROW ON FATHERS, YOU KNOW... IF YOU WANT A MOTOR BIKE SO BADLY, WHY DON'T YOU GAVE YOUR ALLOWANCE AND BUY IT, YOUR-SELF?!!

WHAT DID YOUR FATHER SAY?

OH, HE GAVE ME A LECTURE ON GIVING. HE SAID IF I SHOW HIM I CAN GAVE UP ENOUGH TO PAY FOR THE BIKE, HE'LL PITCH IN ENOUGH TO PAY THE TAX...

THAT'S PRETTY DECENT OF HIM, I THINK... AND REALLY, TEENA, HE'S SO RIGHT ABOUT GIVING.

"LOOK AT ELOISE... SHE GETS THE SAME ALLOWANCE AS WE DO, BUT SHE HAS ALL KINDS OF THINGS 'CAUSE SHE GAVES FOR THEM."

YOU DON'T SEE HER FRITTERING HER MONEY AWAY ON SODAS AND GUNDAES AND SUCH GOOD.

IF ELOISE CAN DO IT, I GUESS I CAN. IN FACT, I MADE A SOLEMN RESOLUTION ONLY THIS MORNING NOT TO SPEND ANY MONEY ON ICE CREAM OR SODAS...

UHP! ??

I'M CHARGING ALL THIS STUFF UNTIL AFTER I GET MY MOTOR BIKE.

Fashion FROCKS

Ready to wear, or cut out ready to make

"MOYA."—Cool summer one-piece attractively styled with a sleeveless, low-cut bodice-top and gathered skirt. The material is Everglaze printed with a rope design. The color choice includes Kelly-green, pink, aqua, and blue.

Ready To Wear: Sizes 32in. and 34in. bust, 67/9; 36in. and 38in. bust, 69/11. Postage and registration, 3/6 extra.

Cut Out Only: Sizes 32in. and 34in. bust, 46/6; 36in. and 38in. bust, 48/3. Postage and registration, 2/9 extra.

"HEDDA."—A pretty summer skirt with a self-ruffle trim, is obtainable in a navy - and - white floral cotton.

Ready To Wear: Sizes 24in., 26in., 28in., and 30in. waist, 32/6. Postage and registration, 1/9 extra.

Cut Out Only: Sizes 24in., 26in., 28in., and 30in. waist, 23/6. Postage and registration, 1/9 extra.

NOTE: Please make a second color choice. No C.O.D. orders accepted. If ordering by mail, send to address given on page 47. Fashion Frocks may be inspected or obtained at Fashion Patterns, 645 Harris St., Ultimo, Sydney.

F2973.—Smart one-piece dress. Contrast is used for the collar and is repeated at the shoulder-line. Sizes 30in. to 36in. bust. Requires 4½yds. 36in. material and 2½yds. 36in. contrast. Price, 3/6.



F2971

Fashion PATTERNS

PATTERN FOR BEGINNERS

F2971.—Beginners' pattern for an easy-to-make young girl's beach coat. Sizes 6, 8, 10, and 12 years. Requires 2½yds. 36in. material. Special price, 2/6.

F2974.—Sunrock with halter neckline has a matching short-sleeved bolero jacket. Sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 3½yds. 36in. material. Price, 3/6.

F2975.—One-piece daytime dress with an unusual ball fringe trim. Sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 5½yds. 36in. material and 19 yds. of fringe. Price, 3/6.

F2976.—Glamorous lace-trimmed nightgown. Sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 3½yds. 36in. material and 2½yds. 3in. lace. Price, 4/6.

FASHION PATTERNS and Needlework Notions may be obtained immediately from Fashion Patterns Pty. Ltd., 645 Harris Street, Ultimo, Sydney (postal address Box 4066, G.P.O., Sydney). Tasmanian readers should address orders to Box 66-D, G.P.O., Hobart; New Zealand readers to Box 666, G.P.O., Auckland.

F2972.—Slim button-through coat-frock styled with a contrasting bind and buttons. Sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 3½yds. 36in. material and 1yd. 36in. contrast. Price, 3/6.



F2976



F2972



F2973



F2974



F2975

NEEDLEWORK NOTIONS



583

No. 583.—SUNSHINE AND MATCHING JACKET

Sunsuit and jacket, equally suitable for a small girl or boy. The outfit is obtainable cut out ready to make and clearly traced to embroidery. The material is rayon crepe-de-chine, the color choice white, blue, or pink. Prices: No. 1 and No. 2, 2/6 each; No. 3, 3/6. Postage, 6d. extra.

No. 584.—BREAKFAST-TRAY SET

The set, including a matching traycloth, tea-cosy, and serviette, is obtainable cut out ready to make and clearly traced to embroidery. The material and color choice is cream or white linen and sheer linen in pink, blue, green, and white. Sizes: Traycloth, 11in. by 17in.; tea-cosy, 13in. by 10in.; and serviette, 11in. by 13in. Prices: Traycloth, 6/11; tea-cosy, 5/3; serviette, 1/6. Postage for complete set, 9d. Postage for individual items, 6d. each.

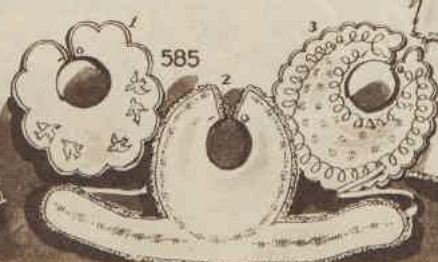
No. 585.—BIBS
Three attractively designed bibs are cut out ready to make and clearly traced to embroidery. The material is rayon crepe-de-chine, the color choice white, blue, or pink. Prices: No. 1 and No. 2, 2/6 each; No. 3, 3/6. Postage, 6d. extra.

No. 586.—SLIP AND PANTIES SET
Lace-trimmed slip and matching panties set is obtainable cut out ready to make with an easy-to-follow instruction chart. The material is rayon crepe-de-chine obtainable in white, pale blue, and pale pink. Sizes: Slip, 32in., 34in., 36in., and 38in. bust. Sizes: Panties, 24in., 26in., 28in., and 30in. waist. Prices: Petticoat, 3/6; postage and registration, 1/6 extra. Panties, 18/9; postage and registration, 1/6 extra. Complete set, 40/11; postage and registration, 1/6 extra.

NOTE: Please make a second color choice. No C.O.D. orders accepted. All Needlework Notions over 9/11 sent by registered post.



584



585



586



Those Horrors
in our home?
NEVER!

If you take pride in your home . . . if you're careful about family health . . . you won't tolerate the presence of irritating, dirty, disease-carrying flying insect pests. Screenwire Doors and Window Screens keep flies, mosquitoes, all the hateful flying pests right OUT of your home. They're the only complete, sure and permanent protection.

Don't put up with the "insect plague" another summer!
Get complete and sure protection with

Cyclone
SCREENWIRE

Your hardware dealer stocks "Cyclone" Screenwire, and any joiner will quote for making doors and screens for Sash, Casement or Louvre Windows.

CYCLONE COMPANY OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED

EMBARRASSING HAIR GONE in 3 minutes!



Safeguard your glamour

Do you realise how often you raise your arms when wearing a swimsuit or strapless dress? All glamour is gone instantly unless under-arms are clean. Razors make hair grow faster, scrape tender skin. But Veet gently "creams" away ugly hair from under-arms and legs, leaving skin smooth.

Large Economy (Double size), 4/11
Medium Size, 3/6
Slightly more in some country districts

VEET removes hair like magic

STOP THAT STOMACH AGONY NOW! One dose relieves that pain after meals.

Maclean Brand Stomach Powder will bring you instant relief from the nausea, heartburn, flatulence and cramping stomach pain of indigestion. Macleans neutralises excess acids quickly, soothes and protects the stomach lining, enabling it to heal. You will find Macleans will bring you relief after many other treatments have failed.

START TREATMENT TODAY

Obtainable from all Chemists

None genuine without this design and signature.



Alma Maclean



Every day in
1954
 you will enjoy
 Arnott's famous Biscuits

1954	JANUARY					1954	FEBRUARY					1954
Sun.	31	3	10	17	24		Sun.	1	7	14	21	28
Mon.		4	11	18	25		Mon.	1	8	15	22	29
Tues.		5	12	19	26		Tues.	2	9	16	23	30
Wed.		6	13	20	27		Wed.	3	10	17	24	31
Thurs.		7	14	21	28		Thurs.	4	11	18	25	
Fri.	1	8	15	22	29		Fri.	5	12	19	26	
Sat.	2	9	16	23	30		Sat.	6	13	20	27	

1954	MARCH					1954	APRIL					1954
Sun.		7	14	21	28		Sun.	4	11	18	25	
Mon.	1	8	15	22	29		Mon.	5	12	19	26	
Tues.	2	9	16	23	30		Tues.	6	13	20	27	
Wed.	3	10	17	24	31		Wed.	7	14	21	28	
Thurs.	4	11	18	25			Thurs.	1	8	15	22	29
Fri.	5	12	19	26			Fri.	2	9	16	23	30
Sat.	6	13	20	27			Sat.	3	10	17	24	

1954	MAY					1954	JUNE					1954
Sun.	30	2	9	16	23		Sun.	6	13	20	27	
Mon.	31	3	10	17	24		Mon.	7	14	21	28	
Tues.		4	11	18	25		Tues.	1	8	15	22	29
Wed.		5	12	19	26		Wed.	2	9	16	23	30
Thurs.		6	13	20	27		Thurs.	3	10	17	24	
Fri.		7	14	21	28		Fri.	4	11	18	25	
Sat.	1	8	15	22	29		Sat.	5	12	19	26	

1954	JULY					1954	AUGUST					1954
Sun.		4	11	18	25		Sun.	1	8	15	22	29
Mon.		5	12	19	26		Mon.	2	9	16	23	30
Tues.		6	13	20	27		Tues.	3	10	17	24	31
Wed.		7	14	21	28		Wed.	4	11	18	25	
Thurs.	1	8	15	22	29		Thurs.	5	12	19	26	
Fri.	2	9	16	23	30		Fri.	6	13	20	27	
Sat.	3	10	17	24	31		Sat.	7	14	21	28	

1954	SEPTEMBER					1954	OCTOBER					1954
Sun.		5	12	19	26		Sun.	31	3	10	17	24
Mon.		6	13	20	27		Mon.		4	11	18	25
Tues.		7	14	21	28		Tues.		5	12	19	26
Wed.	1	8	15	22	29		Wed.		6	13	20	27
Thurs.	2	9	16	23	30		Thurs.		7	14	21	28
Fri.	3	10	17	24			Fri.	1	8	15	22	29
Sat.	4	11	18	25			Sat.	2	9	16	23	30

1954	NOVEMBER					1954	DECEMBER					1954
Sun.		7	14	21	28		Sun.		5	12	19	26
Mon.	1	8	15	22	29		Mon.		6	13	20	27
Tues.	2	9	16	23	30		Tues.		7	14	21	28
Wed.	3	10	17	24			Wed.	1	8	15	22	29
Thurs.	4	11	18	25			Thurs.	2	9	16	23	30
Fri.	5	12	19	26			Fri.	3	10	17	24	31
Sat.	6	13	20	27			Sat.	4	11	18	25	

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 1954

New Year's Day	1st January	Labour Day (Qld.)	3rd May
Australia Day	1st February	Foundation Day (W.A.)	1st June
Labour Day (Tas. & W.A.)	1st March	Queen's Birthday (date to be proclaimed)	
Labour Day (Vic.)	8th March	Bank Holiday (N.S.W.)	2nd August
Good Friday	16th April	6-Hour Day (Sydney)	4th October
Easter Saturday	17th April	Cup Day (Melb.)	2nd November
Easter Monday	19th April	Christmas Day	25th December
Additional Public Holidays in Vic.		Boxing Day	26th December
W.A. and Tas.	26th April	Procl. Day (S.A.)	28th December
Anzac Day	25th April		

There is no Substitute for Quality.

make

Often buttered - never bettered

Only **Arnott's**
Sao Biscuits



THE ANGEL WHO PAWNED HER HARP

The Australian Women's Weekly
Novel December 30, 1953
SUPPLEMENT: Must not be sold separately



BY CHARLES TERROT

The Angel Who Pawned Her Harp

ON a certain wet Monday in May, business was very slack in Mr. Webman's second-hand store. Up till five o'clock only three customers had entered the dark little premises which adjoined a factory where sun-tan lotion was manufactured.

Mr. Webman, who was a licensed pawnbroker, had spent most of the day in his office, tinkering with a musical-box. He had left his assistant, Len Burrows, in charge of the shop.

Repairing musical-boxes was Mr. Webman's hobby. He would spend days in restoring a damaged old instrument which as likely as not he had bought for a few shillings at some sale.

Len, who was a tall, awkward youth of twenty with a mop of fair hair, could hear a faint, whirling tingle as he lounged behind the counter and stared moodily through the rain-spattered window. Another hour to go and his day's work would be over! As soon as six o'clock struck, he would be off home to tea, and then he was taking Elsie Drabble to the pictures.

The Palace was showing a gorgeous musical and a good second feature. For three blissful hours he would be lost in a world of fantasy—or perhaps one should say, "almost lost." He was sorry, in a way, that he was not going to see this excellent programme on his own. Elsie was a bit of a drag; she would chew toffee, clutch at him with sticky hands and expect a fish-and-chip supper afterwards.

He was not really interested in Elsie, although he took her out about twice a month. In the East London suburb where Len lived, people thought it odd if a young man went on his own to the cinema—you had to go with another fellow or take a girl.

Now if the girl had been Jenny Lane he would have run to a proper sit-down supper at the "Caf." He had asked her out several times, but she had politely refused all his invitations.

Len was unpopular with the girls. He had an awkward manner and his appearance was not one to excite interest, for he stood badly and walked with a shambling gait. But his features were really quite good; he had nice brown eyes, excellent teeth and a determined chin. It was a great pity that he did not hold himself better.

He was discontented with his job, which he performed with moderate efficiency, his ambition being to join the Submarine Service. When he was seventeen, he had done a short spell of pre-National Service training in the R.N.V.R., but a chest ailment had caused his transfer into the Navy to be postponed indefinitely. No one could have tried harder than Len to get into the Navy; at the beginning of each month he applied for another medical examination, but although his chest was now cleared up, he had not yet reached the required standard of physical fitness.

He was wondering whether he should occupy the last hour of his working-day by writing his monthly application, when the shop-door opened. Here was a "regular." Mrs. Carper usually turned up on Mondays. She was a fat woman whose moon-like face creased into an incriminating smile as she entered the shop.

"Afternoon, Len." She waddled up to the counter and dumped a bulging string bag in front of him.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Carper. What's it this time?" His tone was one of bleak discouragement.

"I got some lovely teeth for you, dear—want to pop 'em."

"Teeth, eh? What's happened to your brooch?"

"Me old man pinched it last Thursday. Gone down 'is throat, I reckon."

"He hasn't brought it in here."

Mrs. Carper drew a small cardboard box from her bag and handed it to him.

"Lucky I kept these for a rainy day. They belonged to me Granddad."

Len opened the box and took out a set of tobacco-stained dentures.

"Hm! Well, y'know, false teeth aren't worth much these days—not since the National Health came in." He pursed his lips. "Still, I'll be generous to an old client and let you have five bob on 'em."

MRS. CARPER'S watery eyes filled with indignation.

"Bimney, they're worth more than that! Look at the gowld in 'em! Gowld's wot the country wants now, ain't it?"

"We're not the Bank of England, Mrs. Carper."

"Well, then just you feel 'ow lovely an' sharp they are! I tell yer, Granddad used to chew through a steak as thick as yer arm with them nashers."

Len sighed. "It's five bob just the same."

She drew herself up. "Wicked injustice, that's wot! I've a good mind to withdraw me patronage."

"I've heard that one before."

She swiftly changed her tactics. Her tone became wheedling.

"Make it ten bob, there's a duck! I've 'ad ever such a lot of expenses lately. Honest, Len, it's 'ard goin' these days with the price of everythin' goin' up and up."

She gave a loud sniff. "Reely, Len, I don't know where to put meself for a bit of ready just now. Aw, come on, be a sport! Be like one of them knights in that picture as was on at the Palace last month—the one about the 'Old Gypsy an' all'."

"King Arthur's knights weren't pawnbrokers," said Len stonily.

"Ah, but they went in for chival'ry!" She wagged an admonishing finger in his face. "Never let a lady down—that was their motto." An idea suddenly struck her. She jerked her shoulders and cocked a knowing eye at him. "Listen, duck, you make it ten bob an' I'll do yer a good turn."

"What sort of good turn?" he asked flatly.

"I'll tell yer fortune free. You've 'eard, I s'pect, I've got a reel till for tellin' fortunes, Last Mar' I told Mrs. Sedgewick she was goin', and sure enough she kicked the bucket three weeks later."

"I don't want to be told I'm going to die."

"Och, no, I wouldn't tell yer that!" said Mrs. Carper hurriedly. "You've got a lucky face—you won't conk out in a hurry! But I can't tell wot's comin' to yer 'ill I take a squint at yer 'and'."

Len hesitated. He was tempted by

this offer, for he half-believed in all forms of fortune-telling. Once again he examined the teeth. Yes, there was about a quid's worth of gold in them.

"Okay," he muttered. "But I don't know what the Guv will say. He's not keen on teeth."

Mrs. Carper beamed. "Tar ever so, Len! Ere, if Mr. Webman gets snarky, you tell 'im I 'ope to bring 'im a musical-box soon, an' it's a reel beauty."

"And now, that would interest him. You know Mrs. Green who lives down your way? Well, on Saturday morning she brought him one and he's still fiddling about with it."

"That's it grindin' away now, ain't it?"

"Yeah."

"Thought I recognised the tune."

Len made out a pawn-ticket and handed her a ten shilling note.

"Now what about my fortune?" he reminded her.

"Let's 'ave yer 'and, dear."

He held out his right hand. She bent over it, her eyes protruding and her lips bulged outward.

"There's something good comin' your way!" she exclaimed.

"Luck in the pools?"

"It's a girl. A reel amashin' bit of overtime is comin' into your life, Len."

"Is her name Jenny?" he asked hopefully.

"Oh, I dunno, I can't tell that, duck, but this one's a proper corker."

"Can you see anything about the Navy?"

"I can see you're goin' to find yer-self in deep waters before long."

"Crumbs!" he exclaimed. "Anything else?"

"Not for the moment, but perhaps when I come back for Grandad's teeth, I'll 'ave another look." She gathered up her bag. "Well, I must be gettin' home."

"Tar, Mrs. Carper, I'll put the teeth away snug till you call for them."

"Tat-tar."

"Cheerbye."

After she had left the shop, he studied his hand for a few moments, wishing that he himself knew something about palmistry. He decided that the next time he went to the Public Library he would take out a book on the subject. During the past eighteen months, the only books which he had borrowed had been ones about the Navy.

With a slight creak, he drew a pulp magazine from beneath the counter and began reading a story about inter-planetary warfare. He was just getting into the story when his employer emerged from the office.

Mr. Webman was a stout, grey-haired Jew in the late fifties who wore pince-nez perched on the end of his bulbous nose. His benign expression reflected his character, which was easy-going and likeable; not that there were any flies on him! You have to be sharp in the second-hand business, especially when you are a pawnbroker too.

"Anything doing, Len?" He spoke with a slight foreign accent. By birth he was an Austrian, but he had lived in England for many years.

"I've just let Mrs. Carper have ten bob on a set of teeth," answered his assistant. "Okay, Guv?"

"Where are they?"

Len opened a drawer and handed him the dentures.

"One tiny piece of gold," Mr. Webman frowned slightly. "You shouldn't have given her more than five shillings."

"Sorry, Guv."

"It doesn't matter much. Anything else?"

"Not a thing. Just another wet Monday," Len sighed wistfully. "I do wish something would happen for a change."

"Uh?"

"Well, something like a chap coming in and trying to pawn the Koh-i-noor. Something with a kick in it!"

Mr. Webman eyed him with disapproval over the top of his glasses.

"I wouldn't want that kind of sensation here. It's the steady flow of small clients who bring in the money."

Len tapped his magazine. "I'm just reading a story about flying saucers. Wouldn't it be wizard if one landed slap outside the shop and we had some of those Martians in here! Bet they'd liven things up!"

"You keep your thoughts down to earth, my boy," Mr. Webman looked round the shop and his attention was caught by a pile of cups and saucers in a corner. "You must make some nice neat stacks of all that crockery."

"Okay," said Len in a fed-up tone. Mr. Webman returned to his office, which was down a short passage, and closed the door. It was a small room, lined with shelves on which rested scores of musical-boxes of every size and description.

There were boxes brightly painted with Alpine flowers, which contained the gay folk-music of Switzerland and Austria; there were heavy mahogany instruments which played Teutonic marches; there were machines of great complexity which were really musical-marionettes, shows with stuffed monkeys that banged cymbals, Napoleonic soldiers who blew trumpets, and dolls who prouetted in faded Empire dresses to the strains of long-forgotten waltzes. On the mantelpiece was a clock by James Cox which displayed automatic changing scenes to the accompaniment of music on the stroke of every hour.

Another corner was occupied by a glass show-case full of miniature boxes, chiming watches, musical seals, cane tops and bombomieres. Two of the chairs in the room were musical chairs, which played Irish airs when sat on, and by the gas-ring on the window-sill stood a musical kettle and a musical teapot.

All these instruments were in working order, but some had been silent for more than a century before they had been brought into this room and repaired by Mr. Webman. He often wondered what would become of his collection when he died.

He had no children to whom he could leave it, and his wife had died in Vienna in 1919. He hated the idea of it being sold by piece by piece, but the thought of his carefully restored mechanisms remaining silent for long periods in a museum was equally distasteful. He was continually changing his will.

The instrument on which he had been working since Saturday stood on the table in the centre of the room, surrounded by clock-repairer's tools. It was quite an ingenious contrivance by Stanley Pawnhurst, whose work had fascinated Queen Victoria at the Great Exhibition. It took the form of a model railway-engine with a high brass smoke-stack. When a lever in the driving compartment was depressed, the mechanism concealed in the boiler played "Twanky-dillo".

Mr. Webman inserted the winding-key beneath the boiler and began turning it. The instrument was not working to his entire satisfaction. He

had re-pinned the cylinder, checked the regulating gear and fitted a new countersink, but there was still a discordant clank accompanying the sixth bar of the melody, and so far he had been unable to discover the cause of the trouble.

He was about to push down the starting-lever when the telephone rang. He crossed to his desk and lifted the receiver.

"Hallo, Mr. Webman speaking... Oh, hallo, Ned! I haven't heard from you for a long while. Have you been back to Ireland?... Oh, I'm hunky-dory. Business is a little slack right now, but why should I mind?" He shrugged his shoulders and chuckled. "I have more time for my musical-boxes. Listen, my friend, shall we meet for a drink this evening?... Ah, that is good!... Well, I'll be along about eight-thirty—okay?... Fine!... Good-bye, Ned."

Ned Sullivan was a commercial traveller whom Mr. Webman had known for many years. When Ned was working the London area, he usually stayed at the Red Lion in the High Street. As soon as he arrived, he would get in touch with Mr. Webman and during the period of his stay they would meet several times a week in the saloon bar. Mr. Webman looked forward to these occasions, for he himself did not travel much and Ned always had a fund of amusing stories.

The prospect of seeing his friend again had the effect of a mental tonic and as soon as he sat down at the table he solved the mystery of the clank. Of course there was only one thing it could be—bed-plate friction! He started to take the whole instrument to pieces again.

Len was kneeling in a corner of the shop with his back to the door, dusting and stacking the collection of grimy cups and saucers which Mr. Webman had bought for ten shillings at a sale on Friday. His boredom with the task expressed itself in his very cavalier treatment of the china, some of which was already cracked. He smashed two cups and three saucers.

LEN had not liked being ticked-off. Even a mild reprimand made him feel inferior and angry. He tried to sublimate his feelings by conjuring up a fantasy of himself as the commander of a submarine engaged in sinking a Russian convoy.

Having completed his task, he stood up and surveyed the fairly tidy pile of crockery with a sigh of relief. Now he could get back to the story of interplanetary warfare, which should last him until closing-time. He turned and, as he did so, his whole expression changed to one of startled incredulity.

"Crums!" he gasped.

Standing just inside the doorway was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen. She was tall and slender with an angelic countenance and long golden hair falling round her shoulders. A shaft of pale sunlight, streaming through the rain-spattered window of the shop, seemed to cast a halo round her head. She was wearing a dress of striking simplicity—low-necked with bishop sleeves and a skirt plaited on Greek classical lines.

Beside her stood a full-sized harp. "Good afternoon," said the Angel in a low, musical voice.

"G-good afternoon, miss," stammered Len.

"I understand that you make loans to people."

"Well, yes... that is, sometimes."

"If I leave my harp here, will you lend me a few pounds?"

Len's bewilderment increased. "I-I dunno, miss." He swallowed hard. "I think it'd better see the Guv to have a word with you. Half a mo!"

He hurried out of the shop and along to Mr. Webman's office. Slamming the door behind him, he said, "Guv, there's a new customer just come into the shop. I think you'd better see her."

Without looking up from his work, Mr. Webman murmured, "Why can't you deal with her, Len? I'm busy."

Len scratched his head. "She's—well, she's very different to our usual lot. 'Class,' that's what she is. She wants to leave a harp with us. Wants to pop it."

Mr. Webman stared frowningly at his assistant.

"What's wrong with you, my boy? You look as though you'd seen a ghost."

"More like an angel!" exclaimed Len. "She's a smashing number. But I can't think how she got that whopping great harp into the shop without me hearing. Grant you I was making a bit of a row with the crockery, but I didn't hear a sound. I turned round and there she was!"

Mr. Webman got up from the table. "I can't have my shop littered up with harps. Maybe I'd better see her."

Followed by Len, he went through to the shop. For a moment he stared at the Angel in silence. Now he could fully understand Len's confusion.

She smiled at him sweetly. "Good afternoon."

With some difficulty, he pulled himself together. This gawping would never do. He addressed her in a business-like tone:

"Good afternoon, miss. You want to raise a loan on a harp?"

"Yes," she said meekly.

"Well, I'm sorry, miss, but I can't do it."

"Oh!"

"You see it's like this. Harps are very difficult things to sell, and, besides, they take up so much room."

"Oh, dear!" she whispered. "This is a very special harp and it has a wonderful tone."

Mr. Webman spread out his hands.

"Maybe, but—"

"I'll play you something on it," she said quickly.

Her hands caressed the strings; the room was filled with soft, haunting music which for some reason made Mr. Webman feel as though the pale sunbeams were caught up in the melody.

When the last note died away, he was silent for a moment. Once again, he had to remind himself that he was a businessman.

"Ur-uh, it has a nice tone, but I'm afraid that can't alter my decision," he told her crisply. "Now if you'd brought along a smaller instrument—a musical-box, for instance—I might have been able to make a suggestion. Or a piece of jewellery—that would have done."

"But I haven't any jewellery—and oh! I do need the money so badly!"

He glanced down at her pretty dress, which was made of some kind of filmy material shot through, it seemed, with silver. It was a lovely creation which must have cost a great deal. The girl certainly did not look as though she were in need of money.

As though reading his thoughts, she said, "It's vital I should have it." A note of desperation crept into her voice. "I've just arrived in London and I'm penniless. I decided to come here for my holiday. I arrived on Saturday evening and straight away I lost all my holiday money."

"Lost it, eh?" he exclaimed sharply. "Have you told the police?"

She shook her head and stared at him with big, innocent eyes.

"Oh, no! You see, I put it all on the wrong dog. It was the first time I've ever been to greyhound racing."

He asked no more. "That was a silly thing to do!" His brows contracted.

in a puzzled frown. "A harp is a queer thing to take with you on a holiday."

"I had nowhere to leave it," she said. "Please help me!"

"I can't take the risk, my dear. I know nothing about harps. They're right out of my line. Why don't you take it round to a music shop? They might give me a few pounds for it. She looked shocked. "Oh, I couldn't sell it under any circumstances."

"Why not?"

"I'm not allowed to. It's—it's—well, I'm trusted with it."

"You mean it's not yours to sell?"

"Oh, yes, it's mine, but if I sold it, there'd be terrible trouble when I got home." Her eyes filled with tears. "Please, please help me. Twenty pounds would be sufficient. I'll send a message home at once and I promise you faithfully I'll return on Saturday and pay you back."

He shook his head slowly. "No, miss, I can't do it."

She gave a little sob. And then his heart was melted. All his long experience as a pawnbroker was forgotten.

"Now, now. There's no need to get upset," he said unhappily.

"But of course I am—I'm desperate!" She burst into a flood of tears.

He was defeated. With a shrug of his shoulders, he said, "Oh, very well! Opening the till, he counted out twenty pound notes."

Her smile of gratitude was as beautiful as a rainbow.

"Thank you very much indeed," she said, gathering up the notes. "I'll always remember you as one of the kindest people I've ever met. And one day I'll repay you!"

He looked up in alarm. "Hey! You'll repay me on Saturday!"

"Of course! I was thinking of other things," she said in a remote tone.

"Good day to you, miss." He turned to Len. "Give her a ticket."

"Okay, Guv," answered his assistant.

Mr. Webman returned to his office, shaking his head and muttering to himself.

Without taking his eyes off the Angel, Len pulled out a printed ticket from a drawer.

"Er—miss, are you staying locally?" he asked her.

"Perhaps I may do," she answered vaguely.

"There's some nice boarding-houses near here," he told her. "I could show you one you might like specially; it's in Grey Street, right next door to the Shining Youth Club—very convenient it would be, because you could drop into the Club any time you fancied."

"How kind of you!" she exclaimed. "But if you don't mind I think I'd like to explore on my own for a while."

He gulped. "Then you don't know East London well?"

"Oh, no, I've never been here before. It's all so wonderful—such a refreshing change from home."

"Are you planning to do anything special while you're on holiday?"

She smiled dreamily. "No, I shall just float around."

Len summoned up all his courage. "Er—miss—I—I was sort of wondering if you're interested in pictures?"

"What kind of pictures?" she asked.

"Er—films—movies."

"Oh! She exclaimed. "It depends." He ran his finger round the inside of his collar and fixed her with an agonised stare.

"I—I was wondering—that is—there's a smashing musical on at the Palace this week. 'My Blue Heaven' it's called. Would you care to come and see it with me this evening?"

She put her head on one side and looked up at the ceiling. Then, to his disappointment, she shook her head.

"Thank you very much, but I only

want to see escapist films while I'm here."

"Then what about going to . . ."

"What was that you said, miss?"

"Please don't think me rude," she said, "but the only films I'd like to see on holiday are some rather grim ones. However, I'd love to visit the Shining Youth Club. Tell me, do you belong to it?"

"Yes, miss," he answered eagerly.

"I'm often in there in the evenings. I think you'd enjoy it, though mind you, it's not very posh. Could we make a date, d'you think?"

"I'd rather not arrange anything definite at the moment—you see my plans are rather uncertain—but I promise you I'll drop in one evening. Will you tell me your name, so that I'll know who to ask for?"

"Len Burrows."

"I won't forget it. And now, Len, what's the time?"

He glanced at his watch. "Nearly six o'clock."

"I must fly!" she exclaimed. "Good-bye."

"Good-bye, miss," he answered faintly.

In trance-like wonder, he watched her go. When the door had closed behind her, he murmured to himself, "What a number! What a smasher!"

For several moments he was lost in speculation as to who she could be, then suddenly he remembered that he had not filled in her pawn ticket.

"Oh, crumbs!" he exclaimed.

He vaulted over the counter, flung open the shop door and ran out into street, waving the pawn ticket.

"Miss! Miss! I haven't given you your ticket," he shouted.

But there was no sign of her.

Girl-workers were surging out of the sun-tan factory, a quaint Victorian building which towered over the little second-hand store. Some of the girls giggled at Len and others made sarcastic comments about him as he stood in the middle of the street, craning his neck and waving the ticket.

"Who's yelled you, sonny-boy?" called out one.

He gave her an angry look and shuffled back into the shop, his shoulders hunched and his face burning.

ONCE the Red Lion had been a coaching inn and its exterior was very attractive. With its half-timbering, king post roof and massive sixteenth-century chimneys it seemed curiously out of place in the shabby High Street. It was flanked by a bank and a cycle shop, facing it was the twentieth-century "temple" where Len and his generation worshipped—The Palace Cinema.

The interior of the Red Lion had been modernised with a complete disregard for preserving anything of the original atmosphere. It had chromium pillars, harsh strip-lighting, mirrors let into the walls and steel tubular furniture.

The saloon bar, where Mr. Webman met Ned Sullivan, contained a big television set, and as an excellent variety programme was being shown that evening, the room was very full.

There were no tables vacant and so after the two friends had got their drinks from Sally, a pretty redhead they stood in a corner close to the bar.

Ned, who was a dapper little man with a large mouth and a puckered face, had a long story to tell about his gay old mother who had been to a party in Dublin and had seen the ghost of her grandfather walking down Grafton Street. Ned was very superstitious and never doubted her story for a moment.

Mr. Webman was frankly sceptical.

and well he might have been, for on Ned's frank admission his mother was nearly blind and at the time she had been having a dispute with two policemen who objected to her singing.

Anyway, it was nearly nine o'clock before Mr. Webman was able to relate his queer story—about the girl and the harp. Ned listened with intense interest, his little eyes, which were like black cherries, sparkling with excitement. He nodded vigorously when Mr. Webman finished his account of the afternoon's unusual episode by saying, "I'll be honest with you, Ned, I've never known anything like it happen before."

"Sure it's a strange story, Josh. The strangest I've heard for a long while. It reminds me of me brother Paddy. When we were living in Galway, he came home one night and told us he'd seen the fairies playing on the parapet of the Bridge."

"I expect he'd been drinking poteen," said Mr. Webman.

"Sure he doesn't touch the stuff!" answered Ned indignantly. "He saw the Little People with their wings on all as clearly as you saw that angel, and that's the fact of it!"

"Who said anything about her being an angel?"

"Well now, who but an angel would be carrying round a harp and wearing a beautiful white dress?"

"It's possible to buy a harp for a tenner these days," said Mr. Webman. "That's what she did, I expect. She's made a nice ten pounds' profit for herself."

"Now did you notice her back?"

"What's that got to do with it?"

"You might have seen her wings!"

"She hadn't any wings!"

"Perhaps she was wearing them under her dress."

Sally, who had a moment to spare, leant over the bar.

"How long are you staying this time, Mr. Sullivan?"

"About a month, m'dear," answered Ned. "I've got an important new range of shirts to push, and then I'll be taking a few days' holiday."

"What, here?"

"Sure I will."

"Not much of a place for a holiday."

"Begor, I think it's fine! And I'll like it better if you'll come for a trip in my car one day."

Sally looked very pleased.

"Oh, thanks, Mr. Sullivan, I'd love to!"

Sally was called to the other end of the bar.

"What does that girl see in you," said Mr. Webman.

"She's a nice girl," said Ned. "She appreciates my stories."

At this moment, a man standing near them turned round. He was large and florid-faced with a handle-bar moustache. He wore a smart blue suit, and a bowler hat on the back of his head. Neither Mr. Webman nor Ned remembered having seen him before.

"Pardon me butting in," he said, "but can one of you gents oblige me with a light?"

"Certainly," said Ned, taking out a cigarette lighter and flicking it open. "Thanks. Will you have a cig?"

"I've just put one out." Suddenly Ned recognised the stranger's tie, which was of grey watered silk embroidered with sharmocks. "Begor, if that's not one of our ties!" he exclaimed.

The man looked down with a puzzled expression.

"My tie? What about it?"

"I'm a commercial traveller in men's haberdashery. Your tie is from our Dublin factory—I recognise the pattern."

"That so, old man? Can't remember

where I got it. Oh, I believe it was in Liverpool."

The stranger took a sip of beer. "Matter of fact, I'm a traveller too," he said.

"It's a fine life, eh?" exclaimed Ned. "Not too bad. Of course my line is very different to yours."

Mr. Webman asked him, "What do you travel in, Mister?"

"Parker's the name. I'm in musical instruments."

"Is that so?" said Mr. Webman. "My firm buy 'em up second-hand, then re-condition 'em."

"An interesting line!"

"Yes, we made a good profit last year," conceded Parker.

Ned gave Mr. Webman a dig in the ribs.

"You've always got a few old instruments in your place, haven't you, Josh?" "You ought to show 'em to this gentleman," he turned to Parker. "My friend, Mr. Webman, has a second-hand store."

"I expect his prices would be too high for me!" said Parker with a faint smile.

"Do you specialise in any particular type of instrument?" asked Mr. Webman.

"Well, brass and drums mostly. We do a lot of our business with the Boy Scouts and the Church Lads' Brigade."

"So?"

Parker gave him a quick glance. "Think you've got anything which might interest me?"

"Um—yes, a few things."

"Then perhaps I might drop into your place sometime. Got a card on you?"

"Yes," Mr. Webman took a card from his wallet.

"Thanks, old man. I'll be along, but mind you I can't afford fancy prices."

"Maybe we'll be able to do some business. You don't want a harp, do you?" He added quickly, "Not that I can sell it right now."

Parker chuckled. "Aw, I dunno, old man. Harps are a tricky line to push."

"Yes, I can imagine," said Mr. Webman with a slight sigh.

"Did you know there are only about two hundred people in the whole of England who can play a harp?"

"As few as that?"

"Not so many perhaps. Then there's the difficulty of getting the music."

"What's difficult about that?"

"Well, you see, nearly all the music specially written for the harp was printed in Germany, and during the war the plates were melted down. You'd be surprised at the number of tanks which were made out of harp music."

"So?"

"Still, if I had a nipper who was keen on music, I'd have him or her taught to play the harp. There's such a shortage of harpists today that a fair player can make twelve hundred a year without any trouble at all."

"Very interesting," said Ned.

Parker looked up at the clock over the bar.

"Jimmy, I'd forgotten it was so late."

He wiped down his beer and winked at Mr. Webman. "Cheerio! I'll pop into your shop sometime."

"Good evening," said Mr. Webman.

"Nice to have met you."

When Parker had gone, Ned said to his friend, "Lucky you meeting him, Josh."

Mr. Webman shrugged his shoulders. "You heard what he said about harps."

"I wouldn't be worrying yet awhile. The angel may come back for it."

Mr. Webman shook his head gloomily. "No, my friend. I don't think she will."

Ned patted him on the shoulder.

"Ah, cheer up, Josh! Will you be having another drink to wash the cobwebs off your heart?"

Ned turned to the bar. "Sally, two more half-bitters, please. Now tell me, Sally, have you seen an angel lately?"

"Can't say I have," answered Sally, drawing the beer.

"I just wondered whether she'd been in here," Ned looked over his shoulder at Mr. Webman. "Which day is she supposed to be collecting her harp?"

"Saturday," answered Mr. Webman. "But she won't! That girl has made a proper mug out of me."

Len waited outside The Palace for nearly half an hour, and when she did turn up she looked an awful mess.

No one could possibly describe Elsie as being pretty. The most complimentary adjective which had ever been applied to her was "bony". She was very large and her face was swarthy, with little pale blue eyes and coarse lips which she daubed inexpertly with a magenta stick. Len had often felt that she would grow into a second Mrs. Carper. Her one attribute, so far as he was concerned, was that she was reliable.

Other girls whom he asked out for the evening were apt to put him off at the last moment with such excuses as exorbitant grandmothers, impending flu and parental orders to baby-sit. But Elsie's social life never seemed to be disrupted by sudden misfortunes of this kind. It was very seldom that she was late at their usual meeting-place.

"It's the ruddy limit!" he told himself as he stood waiting by the door which displayed the lines of the various items in the programme. "Serve her right if I cleared off and didn't ask her out again."

He took a half-smoked cigarette from behind his ear and lit it. He did not really care for smoking, but it made him feel less self-conscious when he thought he was being stared at. He always thought that people were looking at him and weighing him up. In point of fact, the people entering the cinema hardly gave him a second glance, but in his imagination they were inwardly jeering at him.

A trolley-bus halted near the cinema and a surge of young people entered the foyer. Amongst them was a moppet named Shirley who on three occasions had been a sudden victim of flu after accepting invitations from Len. He gave her a sickly smile as she passed him, and she gave him a brief, cold nod. He heard her escort, a soldier, ask, "Who was that?"

He was glad that he could not catch her reply. He told himself that he did not give a tinker's care for Shirley; she was too flashy for him, and quick-tempered—so he had been told.

His thoughts turned to the girl who had pawned her harp. Was there the slightest possibility of her coming to the Club one evening? He had to admit that in all probability she was merely being polite in saying she would. However, he indulged in a fantasy of her turning up at the Club and asking for him. He pictured the amazement and envy of all the male members, as they watched him greet this enchanting creature and take her along to the canteen for a cup of tea.

He was sensible enough to realise that there would be no hope of making a "steady" of her. After all, she was only on holiday and apart from that it stood to reason that a girl with her looks must have a host of admirers. But her prestige value to him would be terrific. After he had been seen with her, any girl in the Club would be proud to go out with him—at least, that's what he thought.

His daydream was ended by Elsie, who had entered the foyer without him noticing her.

"Sorry I'm late, Lemmy-boy," she said. "It's Mm's birthday and we had a glass of port after tea. I quite forgot the time."

He scowled at her, thinking that he had seldom seen her look less attractive. She was wearing a puce-colored frock, which was much too small for her, and a pink hat with a long feather sticking up from the crown.

"We'll have missed the first feature," he mumbled.

"That so?" she answered casually. "Pity! Still, I've said I'm sorry, 'aven't I?" She pulled a sticky paper cone out of her handbag. "Have a toff."

"No, thanks. We'd better go in, I suppose."

"I'm not particular," she exclaimed tartly. "If you want to know, we were 'aving a smashing time at 'ome, and I made a big sacrifice coming along 'ere. An' for what?—I find you looking like a sick giraffe and snarling away 'cause I'm two minutes late."

"You're half an hour late," he told her sourly. "I was going to give you another two minutes then clear off."

She tapped her foot impatiently and put her hands on her hips.

"Oh yeah? In that case, I might 'ave saved myself the trouble of coming."

Suddenly his temper flared. "I wish you had!"

She looked at him with small angry eyes. "Very well, you stinking old drainpipe, I'll go home. S'matter-of-fact, I've been noticing lytely 'ow shocking your manners are getting, and I'm not the only one who says the same. You needn't be in any 'urry to ask me out again!" She turned on her heels and strutted out of the cinema.

As Len regarded her retreating figure, his anger gave way to remorse. He dreaded being left without any girl friend at all.

"Hey, wait a minute, Elsie!" He ran after her. "Sorry, I didn't mean to be snarky."

"S'alright, Len, I quite understand," she answered coldly.

He hovered round her as she took up a plump stance by the bus stop.

"Oh, come off it, Elsie. I don't want a tiff! I've had a very hard day and it's put me on edge. A lot of difficult customers. And old Webman's been in one of his moods. Give a fellow a break!"

"S'alright," she repeated in the same tone. "I know just 'ow you feel. You're not the only one who's 'ad an 'ard day."

"Will you think again?" he asked her pleadingly.

She hesitated. "I dunno, I'm not used to insulting behaviour. Sides, I made a great sacrifice coming at all and Mm will be ever so pleased to see me back 'ome."

A bus drew up but she did not get in at once.

Len saw her expression. It was one of malicious pleasure. He realised that she had no intention of going home. She merely wanted to humiliate him. His rebellious mood returned.

"Good-bye, Elsie," was all he said.

He heard her gasp. "Well!" and then the conductor telling her, "Come on, Bessie, I'm not waiting all night for you!" When he heard the bus move off, he turned round to see whether she had got on. She had.

"Blow!" he said.

He slouched back into the cinema and stared moodily at the box-office, where an elderly, frizzy-haired woman was cleaning her nails. He was uncertain whether he would buy a ticket. He reminded himself that Elsie's departure had saved him the price of a one-and-sixpenny and so it would be reasonable if he went into the three-shilling seats. If he slipped out just before she

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He heard her gasp. "Well!" and then the conductor telling her, "Come on, Bessie, I'm not waiting all night for you!" When he heard the bus move off, he turned round to see whether she had got on. She had.

"Blow!" he said.

He slouched back into the cinema and stared moodily at the box-office, where an elderly, frizzy-haired woman was cleaning her nails. He was uncertain whether he would buy a ticket. He reminded himself that Elsie's departure had saved him the price of a one-and-sixpenny and so it would be reasonable if he went into the three-shilling seats. If he slipped out just before she

end it would be unlikely that any of his acquaintances would see him.

He was about to approach the box-office when a tall, good-looking sailor entered the foyer with a very attractive brunette. She stood waiting by the staircase while her escort bought the tickets.

Len projected himself into the sailor's uniform. He imagined himself taking the girl's hand and leading her up the staircase into the dim auditorium. They would get a double in the back row—"Lovers' Row" it was called—and as soon as they sat down he would slip his arm round her waist. "Crumba! It'd be smashing!"

Then when the lights went up for the ice-cream sellers to ply their trade people would turn round and look at him and whisper to each other. "You can always trust a sailor to pick 'em! Perhaps someone might add, 'I bet that one's in the Submarine Service!'"

The girl saw him staring at her and turned away. When the sailor joined her, she said in quite a loud voice, "There's a queer type over there. He's been looking at me as if he'd like to gobble me up."

The sailor laughed. "Want me to black his eye?"

"You've got enough trouble on your hands already," she answered. "Come on, or we'll miss the whole picture." They linked arms and went up the staircase.

After that, Len did not want to go in. He felt thoroughly miserable. Why did everyone despise him so?

He wandered slowly up the High Street, undecided as to what he would do next. There were only two alternatives: to go home and listen to the wireless, or to go to the Club and play table-tennis. Eventually, he decided to go to the Club.

The Shining Youth Club catered for both sexes between the ages of twelve and twenty-one and was owned by the Council. It was quite efficiently run by two trained youth leaders—a man and a woman—who organised amateur theatricals, dances, lectures, and so on.

Len and his contemporaries took it very much as a matter of course and seldom showed any appreciation of all the hard work that went on behind the scenes. But if it had closed down, they would have been very sorry. The premises were open every evening, and if you had nothing better to do you could go along there and have a game of table-tennis or darts and a snack in the canteen.

Len had forgotten that on this particular evening a dance was being held to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Club's opening. His footsteps quickened as he heard the sound of music down the narrow street in which the building stood. He liked dances; there was always the chance he might meet a girl.

Before entering the hall, which was thronged with youngsters doing a square-dance, he went into the cloak-room. He was smirking his unruly hair with water when a youth named Tom Pickering, came up behind him and tapped his shoulder.

"Hallo, Len. Your girl has been looking for you."

Len's heart sank. Elsie must have regretted their quarrel and banked on him coming along here.

"Oh, blast!" he said.

Tom looked at him in surprise. "Struth, if I'd got a dame like yours, she'd have found me waiting on the doorstep."

"You mean she's not Elsie?" Len asked quickly.

"Look here, chum, have you gone off your rocker? Can't you remember your appointments? Anyhow, she's in the library. Mr. Sykes told her she'd have to wait there because of the rule—you know, the one about skirts who

aren't members not being allowed to come to a dance without a guy."

Len did not wait to hear anything further.

"Crumba! Thanks!" he muttered and rushed out of the room.

The library was reached by a narrow staircase which Len bounded up, his heart racing madly. Flinging open the door, he came face to face with the Angel. In fact, he nearly knocked her down, for she was just about to come out.

She gave him that same wonderful smile which had turned him upside down a few hours earlier.

"Hallo," she said, "I'm glad you've arrived."

He strove to find words which would adequately express his emotions, but for the moment he was quite tongue-tied. He could only stare at her with incredulity and wonder.

If anything, she looked even more beautiful than she had done that afternoon. Indeed, there was something almost terrifying about her beauty. Her long hair was brushed to a smooth golden brilliance, her eyes were like shining deep pools, and the soft bow of her mouth had about it a quality of transparency, like the pink bloom of an orchid touched with dew.

"I do hope you don't mind me taking you at your word when you asked me to visit your Club," she said. "I was drifting about in this neighborhood and I happened to hear the music."

At last Len found his voice. "I—I'm sorry I wasn't here when you arrived," he said. "If only I'd have known you were coming—golly, I'd have—I'd have—well, anyway, you're here!"

"Yes," she said, looking round the shabby room. "And I think it's lovely."

"I hope you haven't been waiting long. I'm afraid you wouldn't have found much in the ways of books that would interest you. They're mostly detective stories."

"Oh, but I adore detective stories!" she declared.

He saw that she was holding a bulky volume entitled *Great Short Stories of Detection, Mystery and Horror*.

"You've been reading that?" he asked in surprise.

"Yes, I'm finding it so refreshing. I was wondering whether I could borrow it."

LEN scratched his head. "Well, actually that's a bit difficult. Only members are supposed to borrow books."

"Oh, then it doesn't matter a bit," she said gently. "I only wondered."

"What would you like to do, miss?" he asked her nervously. "Would you like to go on reading here, or see round the Club, or . . ."

His voice trailed away into silence. When it came to the point, it seemed almost impossible to ask such a beautiful, fragile-looking creature whether she would care to join the scrimmage below or queue for a cup of tea in the crowded canteen.

"I'd like to dance," she answered. "I love dancing, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, miss! But—I'm not much of a dancer. I mean sometimes I put my feet in the wrong places."

"Then I'll teach you." She gave him another dazzling smile and went out on to the landing. He shambled after her, running his fingers through his damp hair.

When they entered the main hall, the square-dance had just finished and couples were making their way to the sides of the room, which were lined with chairs and benches. The Club band, ensconced on the stage at the far end of the hall, were refreshing themselves with lemonade.

Everyone turned to stare at Len's partner and gradually a hush fell on the hall. Len's reaction was a mixture of

pride and embarrassment. He realised that if only he could appear nonchalant and at ease, a great social triumph was within his grasp, but unfortunately he was shaking like a jelly. They paused just inside the doorway looking for somewhere to sit down. All the chairs were taken.

She slipped her arm through his. "Let's sit on the steps leading up to the stage," she suggested.

"But what about your dress, miss?" he asked miserably. "Those steps are as dirty as anything."

"My dress won't come to any harm," she replied. "I think it'll be fun."

Arm in arm, they walked right across the middle of the dance-floor and the hush deepened to silence.

Reg Riceman was the first to make a move. Reg, who was a dark Jewish-looking youth with wavy hair, was sitting with Jenny Lane in a corner close to the steps which led up to the stage. As Len and the Angel approached, he jumped up and gave them a warm smile.

"Here's a chair for your partner, Len." There was no naivety about Reg. He had a way with girls. Len had envied him for a long while, but until now Reg had practically ignored him.

Before Len could reply, the Angel answered, "Thank you very much, but we're going to sit on the steps."

"Oh, no, we can't allow that!" said Reg. "I'll sit there."

Len felt he ought to make some introduction, but it was a little difficult not knowing his partner's name. And so he merely said to her, "These are two other members."

"Glad to meet you," said Reg to the Angel. "I'm Reggie Riceman and this is Jenny Lane."

The Angel returned his smile but did not disclose her name. She sat down beside Jenny, saying, "If you insist, then I'll take your chair. Thank you so much."

Jenny was feeling rather bemused. She was wondering where on earth that dull gawk, Len Burrows, had met up with a girl who looked like an angel, talked like a debutante, and dressed like a film star. Jenny was a nice girl besides being very pretty—she was slim and dainty with an attractive freckled face and curly honey-colored hair which she wore short—but although she hated to hurt anyone's feelings, she had not felt that she could face an entire evening out with Len.

After all, dozens of boys asked her out and some of them had to be disappointed. But now as she looked at his beautiful girl-friend, she felt she must have made a grave error of judgment in not accepting one of his repeated invitations. Obviously, he must have certain admirable qualities which she had failed to discern.

Reg produced a flashy cigarette-case which he offered to the Angel.

She shook her head. "I'm not allowed to." Then turning to Jenny, she remarked, "What a splendid hall you have. I suppose you use it for other things besides dances?"

"Yes, we have lectures and plays here," Jenny answered shyly. At the moment, she felt quite overawed, as though she were sitting next to Royalty. She pulled out a lace handkerchief from the pocket of her pretty blue square-dancing skirt and began twisting it between her fingers.

"Jenny, why don't you give us a song?" Reg suddenly asked her.

"Oh, I don't think so—not tonight!" she answered quickly.

Len said to the Angel, "Jenny's got a smashing voice. She sings with the band sometimes and knocks us all cold."

"I should love to hear her!" The Angel smiled at Jenny. "Please won't you sing for us?"

Reg made a signal to the band-leader. "Hey, Rusty, Jen wants to sing."

"Oh, I don't!" she protested. But when a few people began clapping and calling out, "Come on, Jenny," she got up and walked on to the stage. "What's it to be, Jen?" Rusty asked her.

"My Blue Heaven!" "Okay, let's go." The drummer beat a roll and Rusty called out, "Lads and Lassies, this evening we present for your entertainment the Club's singing-sweetheart—that East London nightingale—your OWN JENNY LANE!"

A lot of clapping and whistling greeted this announcement. Then a blue spot-light was put on Jenny and she began to sing. She had a charming voice and was able to transmit her own happy personality in the songs she sang. No wonder she was popular, for she made people think there was a young girl who had certain qualities very rare today: she was sweet, fresh, sincere, and completely natural.

When she returned to her chair amidst a storm of applause, Len expressed these sentiments in his own way:

"You were smashing, Jenny! When I hear you warble, I kind of feel life's really worth living."

"It's nice of you to say so, Len," she answered with a little laugh. "But there's a lot of people who wouldn't agree with you."

"Who?" "Well, my kid brothers, for instance. You should hear them hammer on the door when I start practising in the bath!"

Reg was now talking to the Angel. Len seized the opportunity.

"Jenny," he said, "what about going out with me one evening?"

"Well, I'm—"

"How about Wednesday?"

She hesitated, then nodded her head.

"All right, I'd like to. Where do we go—the flicks?"

"Yes, the Palace. It's My Blue Heaven, I know. That'll be fine!"

The next dance was a waltz, a fact for which Len was grateful for he was reasonably sure of the steps. Reg made no attempt to ask the Angel to dance, for there was an unwritten law in the Club that you never tried to swipe another fellow's girl until he had at least one dance with her. And so Len waited a few moments after the music stopped and then asked the Angel to dance.

He thought it would be a nerve-racking experience, but as soon as he took her in his arms he experienced a feeling of self-confidence and happiness. She was a superb dancer and he found himself executing elaborate steps which he had never before attempted except in the privacy of his bedroom, where he occasionally practised, using a bolster as an imaginary partner. Neither of them spoke a word while the band was playing. Only when the music stopped did she address him.

"Thank you so much," she said, joining in the clapping. "I think you dance very well indeed. You're much too modest."

"Oh, I dunno!" he answered, glancing to the roots of his hair. "It's easy with you."

During the interval, no-one got an opportunity to ask the Angel any questions about herself. It was she who asked all the questions.

The next dance was a Paul Jones. She was almost the first girl on the floor and promptly every male in the hall joined the dance. There was a great deal of toasting when the Paul Jones music stopped. Reg, who had the good fortune to find himself opposite her, was nearly knocked over before he could grab her round the waist.

During the next hour, Reg danced with her twice and at the end of that

time he still did not know her name; in fact, the only thing he knew about her was that she was on holidays. In contrast, she knew a great deal about him.

When he and Len went off to the canteen to collect some lemonade and biscuits, he said, "That dame you brought dances like an angel."

"She's all right," said Len casually. His self-esteem had increased enormously in the past hour-and-a-half.

Reg gave him a look of frank envy and respect.

"Where did you meet her?" he asked.

"I mean she's proper Mayfair."

"I've got friends a lot of people don't know about," Len answered darkly. He was giving away nothing. He felt he was unlikely to see the Angel again, except when she came to redeem her harp, and he was determined to get all he could out of this evening.

"We must get together, chum," said Reg. "I haven't seen you around much lately."

"I've been pretty busy," said Len.

"How about us going to the boxing at the Baths on Wednesday?—I know a chap who could let us have a couple of bucks' tickets."

"Sorry, mate, I'm fixed up for Wednesday."

"Lucky beggar! I suppose you're going out with her again?"

"No, actually I'm going out with another girl," Len saw no reason to add that the girl in question happened to be Jenny.

REG shook his head in bewilderment. "You're a dark one!" he muttered. "Got us all beat, eh?"

Len's chest swelled, but he spoke in the same tone of assumed casualness.

"Oh, I get around."

The dance ended at eleven-thirty. After the band had played the National Anthem, the Angel turned to Len and said, "It's been a marvellous evening. I don't know how to thank you enough."

"Thank you, miss!" he answered fervently. "I say, where are you staying?"

She did not seem to hear his question. "Where do you live?" she asked him.

"Oh, not far from here," he said, "but I'm going to see you back to the place you're staying at."

"I'm going to see you home," she stated firmly.

He stared at her in amazement. "Oh, no, I couldn't allow that!"

She laughed gently and slipped her arm through his. "Let's be on our way."

The night was warm. The clouds had rolled away and a full moon shone down on the drab suburb, softening the ugliness of the rows of Victorian villas behind the High Street. The little front-gardens gave off a scent of wall-flowers and damp earth. Outside the pools of light, cast on the wet pavements by the street-lamps, courting couples lingered. Len found himself humming "Some Enchanted Evening."

"Is the Thames near here?" the Angel asked him.

"Why, yes," he answered. "About a quarter of a mile away, that's all."

"I should like to see it. Do you think you could take me there?"

"What now?" he asked.

"Yes, I'd like to see it in the moonlight."

"All right," he said. "Matter-of-fact it's quite a sight on a fine night."

He took her through a maze of winding streets and passages, down a flight of worn steps to the water's edge. Not many people knew about these steps, which dated back to Elizabethan times. Nowadays, the only people who used them regularly were children, who

came to play on the shore at low tide, and "treasure hunters," who grubbed about in the mud, looking for relics of past centuries, such as coins and pottery.

Len and the Angel stood on the bottom step, against which the water was now lapping, and he told her the names of some of the great docks which were visible with their cranes silhouetted against the starry sky.

A police launch slid by, and then they saw quite a large liner steaming majestically down-river. Len stopped talking as they watched it pass. Its top deck was floodlit with colored lights; dance music floated across the water.

"A cruise ship!" he exclaimed rather scornfully.

"Wouldn't you like to go on a cruise?" the Angel asked him.

"Not on one of those things. I hope to go into the Navy—into submarines."

"Don't you enjoy your present job?"

"Oh, it's all right, I suppose, but it isn't life," I mean to say, one never sees anybody interesting. He broke off as he realised what he had said. "Oh, crumbs!" he exclaimed. "I'm not counting you, miss!"

She laughed. "I would have thought Mr. Webman was an interesting person; he has such an intelligent face."

"He's not a bad old stick, but he's all wrapped up in his hobby—he doesn't really think of anything else," Len remembered something which had irritated him very much. "To show you what I mean: about ten times I've asked him to keep an eye open at the sales he goes to for a second-hand copy of a book I want called 'Jane's Fighting Ships.' Well, on Friday he came back from a sale with a catalogue in which this book was listed. I asked him about it and he said he'd clean forgotten. There you are—that's Mr. Webman all over!"

"I wish I could help you get a copy," said the Angel. "I'll have to see what can be done. By the way, what is Mr. Webman's hobby?"

"He's a 'miboxedist'—he collects musical-boxes and repairs 'em. He's got scores of the things in his office."

"But that sounds interesting! Does he often play them to you?"

"No, not often."

The Angel was silent for a moment, then she said, "Len, this evening one of your friends happened to mention that a lot of the lectures you have at your Club are very dull."

"That's so," he agreed.

"I've suddenly thought—why don't you ask Mr. Webman if he would come and talk to you about musical-boxes one evening? Surely he could give a fascinating lecture?"

"That's not half a bad idea, miss!" he exclaimed. "It might send up my stock a bit. I should think the old codger would love doing it."

While they were walking back in the direction of his home, the Angel asked him a lot of questions about himself.

At first, he was tempted to shoot a line, and then for some unknown reason he felt he wanted to unburden himself to her. He told her about his weak chest and his unsuccessful attempts to hoodwink the Naval medical-examiners.

He told her a lot about his private life, how he was continually looking for girl-friends, and what he thought of Jenny and the bad impression she seemed to make on most people. He described his widowed mother and added a lot of details about his home life.

"Does your mother want you to go into the Navy?" the Angel asked him.

"Oh, no," answered Len. "She's always telling me I'll never be strong enough."

"Did your father die long ago?"

"When I was three. But if you don't

mind, I'd rather not talk about my Dad."

"Why not?"
"Well, the fact of the matter is he was a drunken waster. Mum has always said he treated her shockingly."

The Angel made no comment.
The time was getting on for one o'clock when they reached the corner of the street where he lived. It was not until then that he realised he could not possibly allow her to find her own way back to wherever she was staying.

Coming to a halt, he said, "Look here, miss, you can't wander about the streets by yourself at this time of night. You must let me see you to your digs."

"Please don't worry about me," she replied. "But I am beginning to feel a bit sleepy, so if you don't mind I won't come any farther with you."

For the moment, he could not think of anything to say; her tone was so very definite.

And then she did something which took him completely unawares. Suddenly he felt her close against him and her arms encircle his neck. As her lips brushed his cheek, an exquisite shock ran through his whole body.

"It's been a wonderful evening," he heard her say. Then she let him go.

It took him a few seconds to recover. When he was himself again, he looked round to see where she was, but there was no sign of her. Not even faint footprints revealed in what direction she had gone.

He walked slowly down the street, his brain still reeling.

On Tuesday afternoon, Mr. Webman left Len in charge of the shop. At two-thirty he had an appointment with his solicitor, Mr. Franz Schwartz, whose offices were in the City. It may seem strange that he did not consult a local solicitor about his legal affairs, but the fact was that Mr. Schwartz was a close personal friend of long standing.

They had emigrated to England at the same time and for several months had lived in the same Paddington hotel, until Mr. Webman had bought his present business and Mr. Schwartz had got into a first-rate firm of solicitors, specialising in company litigation. They had never lost touch and quite often they met for dinner at a small Kosher restaurant in Soho.

This afternoon, Mr. Webman was visiting his friend for the purpose of changing his will; he had drafted a new one and wanted it put into legal language.

Mr. Schwartz did not think much of it. When he was asked to state his frank opinion, he said, "Josh, you're making a big mistake in leaving the whole of your collection to this nephew of yours. Your last will was a much better one." He took off his thick, horn-rimmed glasses and began polishing them. Through a cloud of cigar-smoke he looked like a fat, genial frog.

"But don't you see, Franz, I want it to be kept intact!" Mr. Webman exclaimed a trifle impatiently. "And what's more, I want it to be appreciated and used."

His friend regarded him quizzically. "Do you think he will appreciate it? I thought you told me he was only interested in building up his fun-fair chain."

Mr. Webman spread out his hands. "Maybe he'll take an interest in it when he gets it. I think he will. His grandfather was a very eminent muboxodist. But even if Ruddle doesn't appreciate it, one of his children or grandchildren may do."

Mr. Schwartz snorted. "Yes, I see you want it entailing."

"How long can I entail it for?"

"Three generations and twenty-one years."

"Then I'll be preserving it intact for quite a long while."

"It'll probably be stored away in a boxroom and forgotten. Much better to allow it to be sold up!"

"Ruddle doesn't need any money—he's a rich man already—and besides, I'm not going to let Hewson have one single item from my collection."

"Hewson?"

"Yes, he thinks he has the best collection of musical-boxes in this country. If he heard that my collection was up for sale, he'd try to buy up all the best pieces. We . . . we do not see eye-to-eye. He is a pirate!"

"I see," Mr. Schwartz rubbed his chin. "Well, I still think your last will was the best you've made so far, Josh. If you leave the collection to a museum it will be safe for all time."

Mr. Webman shook his head slowly.

"My friend, those boxes of mine weren't made just to be looked at, beautiful though some of them are. They were meant to be played."

"It's a pity you can't think of some young person who really would appreciate the collection, and perhaps add to it."

Mr. Schwartz drew deeply at his cigar. "What about your assistant in the shop? Is he interested in musical-boxes?"

MR. WEBMAN laughed shortly. "Len couldn't care that much for them!" He snapped his fingers. "Anyway, I don't suppose he'll stay with me for long. He wants to go into the Navy—not that I think they'll take him. He's not very bright."

Mr. Schwartz had no other suggestions to offer, but nevertheless he was reluctant to make out a new will. Eventually, he persuaded his friend to let the matter stand in abeyance for a month or so.

"After all, Josh, you're going to be here for quite a time yet!" he said. "As a matter of fact, I was thinking when you came in I've never seen you look fitter."

"My health is fine," said Mr. Webman, getting up. "But sometimes I think my brain is getting weak. I find myself doing silly things."

"Don't we all as we grow older?" said Mr. Schwartz, putting a hand on his shoulder, as they crossed to the door.

Mr. Webman paused and turned to him.

"Franz, my friend, would you believe me if I told you that yesterday I allowed myself to be swayed by a pretty girl?"

"Well . . . I'd be surprised."

"That's what happened. A beautiful girl came into the shop with a harp, and I let her have twenty pounds on it. I'm not an expert on harps, but at a guess I would say it might fetch up to ten pounds in the auction room."

"She must have very beautiful!" said Mr. Schwartz with a chuckle. "Are you sure she wasn't an angel?"

"Of course I am!" exclaimed Mr. Webman with a vehemence which quite surprised his friend.

"What a pity!" smiled the solicitor. "I should think an angel's harp would be most valuable!"

They parted after arranging to dine together in a fortnight's time.

Mr. Webman then made his way to Greenwich, where a sale was taking place in a house. He had noted from the catalogue, which he had received in advance, that amongst the items to be auctioned was a "musical sewing-box." He knew it was probably the work of Samuel Friedman of New York; it should be quite an interesting collector's piece.

As soon as he entered the faded

Victorian drawing-room, which was crowded with dealers and members of the general public, he spotted his keenest rival. He was not on speaking terms with Mr. Hewson. Time and again, they had clashed in the auction room, seeking to rob each other of some prize, and it must be stated that on several occasions both had employed means which were not strictly fair to do each other down: secret approaches had been made to the owners of a box, libelous accusations had been whispered, "presents" had been given to the right people.

The sale had already begun when Mr. Webman arrived, and thus he did not have the opportunity of inspecting the Friedman box before it came up for auction. He wondered whether Mr. Hewson had been up to any tricks on this occasion. His rival, a tall, cadaverous man with deep-set fervent eyes, stood in a corner of the room, smoking a pipe; he wore a black corduroy suit and looked rather like Sherlock Holmes.

The auctioneer found it hard to be enthusiastic over the box, which turned out to be a scratched tortoise-shell affair containing a few reels of colored silk thread. It transpired that the musical mechanism, concealed beneath the lid, was out of order. However, he gave a start of surprise when the bidding opened at five pounds.

The value of the box was about three pounds, but within a few minutes the bids had reached four times that figure. Both muboxodists were determined that the other should not get it.

Only when the fifteen pound mark had been reached did the bidding slow down. Three times, the auctioneer raised his hammer to strike the final count when a further bid of five shillings was made either by Mr. Webman or Mr. Hewson. Mr. Webman's last bid was fifteen pounds, fifteen shillings. This time there was a long, long silence while the contestants stared balefully at each other.

As an encouragement, the auctioneer called out, "You know, gentlemen, there's really very little wrong with the musical part of this handsome box. A member of the family was telling me that it was working until a year ago." He gave the lid a vigorous rap. "Now, Mr. Hewson, surely it's worth every penny of sixteen pounds to you?"

Doubtless Mr. Hewson would have signified his assent, but the rap must have shaken the mechanism, for suddenly there was a loud "ping" followed by a horrible jarring sound which resembled two rusty surfaces being ground together; it was very putting-off.

Mr. Webman joined whole-heartedly in the general laughter, for the sound had told him exactly what was wrong with the mechanism; it was something which could be put right very easily—that is, if you had a thorough knowledge of the curious principle of inter-leaved combs which was a feature of all Friedman's work. He also knew that Mr. Hewson was very weak on American mid-nineteenth-century boxes, his specialty being Swiss and French "carillons à musique" of the eighteenth century. A slight flush crept into Mr. Hewson's pale cheeks and with an impatient shrug he stalked out of the room, his hands clasped behind his back. The auctioneer's hammer slammed down and Mr. Webman gave a deep sigh of satisfaction.

At the end of the sale, he was about to leave with the box under his arm when he happened to notice on top of a pile of books a very old copy of Jane's Fighting Ships. Remembering how much Len wanted this book, he stopped and picked it up.

"Hello, Josh, that's a beautiful book!" remarked its new owner, Alfie Rosenberg, who was a Gravesend dealer.

Mr. Webman grunted. "How much, Aine?"

"Five shillings to a friend."

"Three."

"Four and sixpence."

Mr. Webman flicked the pages. "It's foxed. Three and ninepence."

"Look, I haven't time for a nice bit of bargaining, Josh. You can have it for four shillings."

Mr. Webman paid up and departed with a righteous glow in his heart, picturing Len's gratitude. He decided to make him a present of it. Len was not a bad boy, he reflected. The lad's trouble was that he got so easily flustered; really that bit of bad business over the harp was partly his fault—he should have dealt firmly with the girl without bothering his employer, and in any case he should not have forgotten to take the usual particulars. But still, it was going to be hard to replace him if he went into the Navy. Young men who make good pawn-brokers' assistants are not easy to come by.

It was nearly six o'clock when Mr. Webman arrived back at the shop. He ignored the fact that Len was once again reading the forbidden pulp magazine and handed him the copy of *Jane's Fighting Ships*, saying, "I believe this is the book you want."

For a few moments, Len gazed down at the book in amazed silence.

"Crums! It doesn't seem possible!" he exclaimed at last. "She said she'd do something about getting me a copy."

He had not told his employer that the Angel had turned up at the Club on the previous evening.

Mr. Webman frowned; he expected to be thanked.

"I don't know what you mean," he said brusquely. "I happened to see it at a sale. It cost four shillings."

Len shook his head in bewilderment. "Four shillings?" repeated Mr. Webman with increased irritation.

Len stared at him. "You saw it just by chance, Gurr?"

"Of course! And now I'm sorry I did. I had to do some stiff bargaining to get it."

"Oh thanks!" Len fumbled in his pocket. "Thanks ever so much. Oh crumbs! I've only got two bob on me."

"Never mind!" Mr. Webman exclaimed abruptly. "You can have it as a present."

"Thanks ever so much."

"Right, you can go off home now. I'll lock up."

"Okay, Gurr. Cheerbye!"

Len hurried out of the shop, clutching his book.

Later that evening, Mr. Webman went along to the Red Lion. He found Ned sitting in a corner of the saloon bar watching the other customers with speculative interest. Ned was never bored when he was alone; he loved listening to other people's conversation. But he was delighted to see his friend and jumped up to buy him a drink. Saily was not on duty that evening.

"Well now, Josh, what sort of a day have you had?" he asked as they walked back to the table with their glasses.

"It might have been worse, Ned. I had some legal business to do in London this afternoon, then I went to a sale where I bought a box."

"And is it a good one?"

"Quite interesting. I had to pay a lot of money for it, but I saved it from Hewson and that's the main thing."

"Ah, that would have pleased you!"

They sat down and Mr. Webman raised his glass.

"Your good health, Ned."

"Bless you, Josh!" Ned took a deep draught, smacked his lips and regarded Mr. Webman with dancing black eyes. "Now listen to me. I've been thinking all day about that angel."

"She was no angel. Maybe if I made

inquiries from the police I'd find she had just come out of Holloway Prison. I will go to the police if she doesn't come back on Saturday, as she promised."

"That would be a very silly thing to do. Tell me, why shouldn't she be an angel having a bit of a holiday?"

"Angels don't have holidays, and besides there's no such thing."

"Well now, that's a very bigoted thing to say!" exclaimed Ned indignantly.

Mr. Webman shrugged his shoulders. "I know that angels belong to the age of superstition."

"Ah-ha! So this is the age of reason?"

"It's supposed to be."

"Then why shouldn't angels have holidays?—that would be very much more reasonable than a lot of things which happen today."

Mr. Webman chuckled. "If there are any angels left, and if they have holidays, I'm certain they could find somewhere better to go than a dreary East London suburb."

"Begor, Josh, you're wrong! The angel who came into your shop may think that a place like this is a fine change from heaven, which is all so clear and nice and beautiful."

"Ned, my friend, like all Irishmen you'd rather believe the impossible. It's a good thing you aren't in my line of business; you'd be broke in two months!"

"I'm glad I haven't your cynical outlook," retorted Ned. "Now have you had a good look at her harp?"

"Yes, but there's nothing special about it."

"I'd like to have a look at it."

"You can see it any time you're passing," Mr. Webman suddenly had an idea. "Why don't you come and have a bite of supper with me this evening?"

"That's very kind of you, Josh. I'd like to."

They had one or two more drinks and then walked to Mr. Webman's shop, above which was a small flat where he lived. When they went into the shop to inspect the harp, Ned's eagerness to believe in the supernatural suffered a rebuff, for there was certainly nothing very heavenly about the appearance of the instrument. It was badly scratched and the pedals quivered when trod on. It looked as though it might have come out of another second-hand store where it had been standing in a dusty corner for some considerable time.

"It's possible you're right, Josh," was his disappointed verdict. "It doesn't look like an angel's harp to me."

M R. WEBMAN touched

by his friend's crestfallen appearance, decided to produce the treat which he reserved for special occasions with him: some old Irish whisky of which he had about a dozen bottles.

They drank a quarter of a bottle with the chicken, which Mr. Webman got out of his fridge, and by the end of the meal they were in a very merry state.

"Would you like to hear a little music?" Mr. Webman asked when they had done the washing-up.

"Indeed I would!" said Ned. "Some Irish songs, if you have any, and I will sing for you."

They went down to the office, taking with them their glasses and the bottle of whisky, and spent a happy hour with the musical-boxes. Ned sat on one of the musical-chairs, which played "The Wearing of the Green."

"St. Patrick was a Gentleman," and sang lustily. Later, his eyes watered with emotion when one of the boxes gave forth the tune of "The Mountains of Mourne."

"Sure I've never heard it played more beautifully," he declared in a husky voice. "It would be fine if me dear old mother was here to sing the words—she was singing them when she saw the ghost of me great-grandfather; it was his favorite song."

"It's a pity he's not here with us to-night," said Mr. Webman, selecting another box from the shelf. "I expect he'd enjoy this whisky."

"Indeed he would!" agreed Ned, contemplating his empty glass.

"I've enjoyed myself very much," said Ned, "but I must be getting home."

"Will you have one more drink before you go?" asked his host.

"I won't say no," Ned held out his glass, which Mr. Webman replenished liberally.

Both of them now became a little maudlin, their remarks being punctuated by longish silences as the golden "Jew" of Erie suffused their brains.

It was during one of these silences that Mr. Webman heard a faint, creaking sound in the shop. He sat bolt upright, suddenly very wide-awake.

"What's the matter, Josh?" asked Ned sleepily.

Mr. Webman held up a finger to his lips. "Sh-h! Burglars!"

Ned leapt up, knocking over his chair with a terrible clatter.

"Let me get at the dirty hound!" he shouted.

Mr. Webman seized a poker from the grate and followed Ned down the short corridor which led to the back of the shop. Ned walked slowly on tiptoes and twice he turned to his friend and whispered, "Sh-h!"

Mr. Webman was certainly in no hurry to come to grips with the burglar, who might well be members of a cock gang which had been very active in the neighborhood of late.

When they reached the door into the shop, he tapped Ned on the shoulder and whispered, "Maybe we'd better phone the police first."

Ned nodded solemnly and opened the door. He recoiled with a cry of amazement. Mr. Webman, staring over his shoulder, dropped his poker and clutched at the doorway for support.

The shop was drenched in moonlight. In the centre of the room stood the Angel, examining her harp. As the two trembling men stared at her, her face was lit by a heavenly smile.

"Good evening!" she said.

"Good evening," answered Mr. Webman thickly.

Ned remained silent.

"I do hope you don't mind me looking in at this time," she said. "I happened to be passing and I couldn't resist peeping through the window at my beloved harp. Then I tried the door, and as it wasn't locked, I felt sure you wouldn't mind me coming in for a moment."

Mr. Webman passed a hand across his forehead.

"I must have forgotten to lock it," he said shakily.

Ned, who had been wondering how one should address a member of the heavenly host, found his voice.

"Will Your Blamefulness be atter givin' us a tune?"

"Why, of course, I should be delighted to!" she answered at once.

A soft, exquisite melody filled the shop: Sunbeams falling on red velvet—the unfurling of a rosebud—moonlight on a Tyrolean landscape—the flight of a golden eagle soaring upwards; these comparisons of beauty flashed through Mr. Webman's mind as he listened spellbound to the Angel playing her harp, but none of them reached near adequacy.

When she stopped playing, both men were silent for several seconds. Then

Ned whispered, "Thank you, Your Blasphemer. Sure, it was the finest music I've ever heard."

Mr. Webman, who was still feeling quite bemused, said, "We'd like to talk to you, if you can spare the time, miss. Will you come into my office?"

"I'd love to," she replied.

The three of them went along to the office. The Angel looked round the room with interest.

"You certainly have a fascinating collection of musical-boxes," she remarked. "Can I hear some of them?"

"Yes, of course," said Mr. Webman.

He set in motion an animated nativity scene, which was accompanied by a Christmas carol, and then they listened to the Irish box which played "The Mountains of Mourne." After that, he showed the Angel one of the most charming items in his collection: it was a pair of opera glasses by the famous Nicole Peres of Geneva. When you held the glasses up to your eyes, and turned the focusing-screw, you heard tinkling ballet music and at the same time saw a little, white-skirted ballet dancer pirouette in a woodland glade.

The Angel was delighted by all she saw and heard. She filled him with questions about his hobby.

"Do many people collect musical-boxes?" she asked him.

"A lot of people collect them for the cases rather than the music," he answered. "Quite often you will find boxes in the expensive West End shops, which have obviously contained musical mechanisms at some time, but they've been relined to hold cards or cigarettes. It's a great pity."

"I should think so!" she agreed. "But surely aren't young people fascinated when you show them your collection?"

"I've shown it to very few young people," he admitted. "My assistant, Len, takes no interest in it at all."

"Perhaps he's not musical. But I think it's a shame you don't give the younger generation an opportunity of seeing and hearing your boxes. Couldn't you give some lectures on the history of the musical-box? Surely they would help to keep alive an interest in the craft?"

He looked at her thoughtfully. "I've never considered that idea." Then he shrugged his shoulders and chuckled. "But I don't know who would come to the lectures, or where I would give them."

Ned was wondering whether it would be in order to offer the Angel some whisky. He himself felt badly in need of further liquid refreshment.

"I'm sorry we haven't any nectar to offer Your Blasphemer," he said, giving Mr. Webman a meaningful look.

"Thank you, but I'm not thirsty," answered the Angel with another devastating smile. "But please don't let me stop you from drinking."

Mr. Webman refilled Ned's glass and his own. Then he took out of the show-case a tiny gold box, covered with polychrome enamel, which was the work of Piguet. While they were listening to it, the two men drank deeply.

"Enchanting!" said the Angel when the music stopped. "I could listen to that sort of music all night, but it's high time I was on my way."

"Will you play to us one more?" Mr. Webman asked her, as they walked through to the shop.

"Certainly I will," she answered.

Both men thought they would appreciate the music more if they were seated. Mr. Webman drew forward two chairs.

As the Angel began to play, a wonderful feeling of drowsy contentment began to steal over them.

Ned was the first to awake. Daylight

filled the room and the Angel had gone. Her harp had been pushed back into the corner.

Late on Wednesday afternoon, the telephone rang in Mr. Webman's office. He answered the call with a tired sigh.

"Hallo, Mr. Webman speaking."

"Josh, I thought I'd be giving you a ring to find out how you are."

"I've had a bit of a headache all day, Ned, but it's better now."

"I've been feeling fine. It was the best evening I've had in years, and that's the fact of it!"

"I've been meaning to ring up the police," said Mr. Webman in a sombre tone.

"What about?"

"About that girl, of course! I can see it all now."

"Do you mean to say you still don't believe she was the sweetest angel that ever flew out of heaven?"

"Why, of course I don't!" Mr. Webman shrugged his shoulders. "Maybe last night I was taken in, but we had drunk so much excellent whisky we'd have believed anything. And as for her harp playing . . . well, if she'd blown a tin whistle it would have sounded to us like the Vienna Symphony Orchestra."

NED said, "Josh, I'm ashamed to call you my friend! Don't you realise we had the treat of our lives last night? How many people in the world can boast that an angel has played her harp especially for their benefit?"

"I've no doubt you'll make up for a good many," Mr. Webman remarked dryly.

"Sure and it's proud I'll be to tell the story! I shall be telling it to the grandchildren on my dying day."

"But you're still a bachelor!"

"Begor, I won't be for much longer! Just as soon as I get back to Ireland I shall go up to Galway and pick myself a pretty wife from Clifden. It would be a crime not to have grandchildren with a story like that to tell."

"I hope you'll add that there's a natural explanation for everything which happened."

"Indeed I won't! Now tell me, Josh, did you forget to lock up the shop?"

"I—I don't think so, Ned. The girl must have used a skeleton key. It's quite obvious that she intended to steal back her harp."

"Then why didn't she, while we were asleep?"

"Because we'd seen her."

"And if she had been trying to steal it, how would she have carried away a big thing like that?"

"I don't know," Mr. Webman answered unhappily. "Maybe she had a car." He raised his voice in exasperation: "But I am not going to believe she was an angel! It's against all my principles to believe anything so ridiculous! If I let myself believe that, I should soon find that pikes and fairies and—gnomes were coming in to pawn things; then I should know I'd gone crazy and I should be put in an asylum."

"Poor old Josh!" said Ned sadly. "One day you may discover how wrong you are."

"I don't think so, Ned. It's you who'll be disillusioned. I've been too long in the pawnbroking business not to know all the tricks which some people get up to. I admit I was soft in making her a loan on the harp in the first place, but what happened last night has put me on my guard. She won't get anything more out of me."

"I don't suppose she'll try to."

"I'm not so certain," said Mr. Web-

man slowly. "I've just thought of something."

"What?"

"Why was she so interested in my musical-boxes? No young people are interested in them. Ned, I wouldn't be surprised if she was working for that scoundrel Hewson!"

Ned sighed. "What are you talking about, Josh?"

"I would put nothing past Hewson. For fifteen years now he has fought me tooth and nail at all the important box auctions, and twice he has insulted me with offers to buy my collection."

Mr. Webman's voice trembled with indignation mingled with excitement.

"It's my belief that he's now planning to steal my boxes. That girl most probably belongs to a gang of thieves whom he has commissioned to rull me. She is the scout, don't you see? She has been told to find out all she can; where the boxes are kept, the best ways of getting into the office and anything else which will help the thieves."

"Poor old Josh!" said Ned once again. "You'd rather believe any explanation than the right one."

"That is the right one! I shall ring up the police now."

"In that case, I'd better not be keeping you any longer." There was genuine pity, as well as amusement, in Ned's voice. "See you soon, Josh." He rang off.

Mr. Webman did ring up the police. He was put through to the C.I.D., and spoke to a certain Detective-Sergeant Lane, who sounded a little sceptical about the whole business but asked for a detailed description of the Angel.

"I'll find out if anything is known about the young woman," Sergeant Lane promised. "She may be filed in the Rogues' Gallery at the Yard."

"I expect you'll find Hewson there," said Mr. Webman.

"Do you happen to know what Mr. Hewson's profession is?"

"Yes, he restores paintings. But I can assure you, Sergeant, he is a rascal. I would not be in the least surprised to learn that he has a criminal record. It's a great pity you can't arrest him on suspicion—you'd earn the gratitude of the whole of Muboxdom."

"Of what?"

"Muboxdom—that's what we call the world of musical-boxes."

"Oh, I see. Well, Mr. Webman, I think I've got all the details, and I'll keep the situation under close observation."

"Yes, yes, that is good! Thank you, Sergeant."

After this conversation, Mr. Webman felt a great deal easier in his mind. He gave Len a kindly smile when he went into the shop and inquired if there had been any customers.

"Only Mrs. Carper," Len answered. "She wanted a two bob rise on her tectin-pledge."

"You didn't let her have it, I hope?"

"Oh, no, Guv."

Mr. Webman glanced at his watch. The time was ten-to-six.

"You can go off now if you want to."

"Oh, thanks, Guv!" said Len, whose mind was filled with anticipation of his evening out with Jenny Lane.

"Mind you're on time to-morrow."

"You bet I will be!"

Len was about to leave the shop when he remembered the Angel's suggestion about asking Mr. Webman to give a lecture on musical-boxes at the club. He knew that the club's secretary, who arranged the lectures, would be only too grateful to him if he could arrange it.

"Er—Guv, there's something I've

been waiting to ask you," he said, pausing by the door.

"Well, Len?"

"It's a sort of favor. Rather a big one, I'm afraid."

Mr. Webman, imagining that his assistant was going to ask for a rise in salary, looked cross.

"I don't know that I can grant any favors at the present time," he said. "Business is very slack."

"That's just why I thought now would be a good time to ask you," said Len eagerly. "I mean it would give you time to prepare it. It's like this, Guy. You know the Shining Youth Club, which I belong to? Well, we have lectures every so often and I've been wondering whether you could come and talk to us about musical-boxes one evening. You know—bring along a few boxes and play 'em, then tell us something about their history. I'm sure it would go down terribly well."

Mr. Webman looked quite shaken.

"You really think that some people might be interested?" he asked slowly.

"Why, yes, Guy. . . . I'm sure they would be!"

"What an extraordinary coincidence!"

Len was puzzled, for Mr. Webman had said nothing to him about the Angel's visit.

"Has someone else asked you to give a lecture?" he asked naively.

"No, no, my boy, it isn't that."

"Well, anyway, do you think you could come along some time next week?"

"Yes, I think I might enjoy it," said Mr. Webman softly.

Len was too excited to do full justice to the high-tee which his mother prepared for him while he was up in his room, changing into his "best blue."

"I've got a beautiful piece of boiled whale for you this evening, dear," she told him in a tired voice as he sat down at the kitchen table.

"I'm not that hungry, Mum," he said.

Mrs. Burrows turned from the stove and stared at him in silence. She was a tall, scraggy woman with a very long neck and a martyr's face. When her feelings were hurt—and they were hurt very easily—she made no secret of the fact; her head drooped on one side, her mouth fell open and her pale green eyes filled with an expression of the deepest reproach.

Len shifted uncomfortably. "I'm sorry, Mum, but the fact is I've got to be off in two shakes. I'm taking a girl to the Palace, then we're going to have a proper sit-down at the Caf."

"I suppose restaurant food is better than what I give you?" she said at last with a slight break in her voice.

"No, of course it isn't!" he answered miserably. "But don't you see, Mum, it's kind of exciting taking out a new dame. Don't you remember I told you about her? Jenny Lane."

Mrs. Burrows placed an enormous plate of whale and boiled potatoes in front of him.

"It's an awful lot!" he mumbled.

"Len, I had to go right down to Green at the bottom of the High Street to get that for you."

"But you know I'm not all that keen about whale!"

"You may not like it, dear, but it's good for you. You seem to forget you're not like other boys. You need feeding up—want! Just what Dr. Parsons said the last time he saw you!"

"He didn't say anything about me eating whale," muttered Len. "He said fruit."

"There's fruit to follow." She sat down opposite him and poured out the tea. She herself ate nothing but a piece of dry toast.

Len managed to eat about half the whale, which was as tough as an old boot, but the moment came when he knew that if he ate another mouthful he would be sick.

Putting down his knife and fork, he said: "I'm sorry, Mum, but really I've had enough. I've told you I'm not hungry this evening."

This time she made no protest beyond another tired sigh. She got up, scraped his plate into the cat's feeding dish and placed a bowl of very green apples on the table. Len nibbled at one, his eyes fixed on the mantelpiece clock.

"What time are you meeting this girl?" she asked dully.

"Seven."

"What's the hurry then?"

"I'm picking her up at her home."

"Oh."

"She really is smashing, Mum. I'll bring her along to meet you sometime."

Len pushed back his chair and stood up. "I've got to be off," he said.

"What time are you going to be back?"

"I don't know exactly, Mum."

"I suppose you'll be up half the night again."

"I wish you wouldn't always wait up for me. There's no need."

"If I thought you could be trusted not to leave the stove on, I wouldn't."

"I don't suppose I'll feel like a hot drink when I come in."

"You've got to have it—Isn't that what the doctor said? Hot milk every night!" She looked towards the window, which was spattered with rain-drops.

"Of course, you oughtn't to be going out at all on an evening like this. The wind's said heavy rain, and cold winds into the bargain."

"I'll put on my mac," he said with a sigh.

"I should think you will! And your muffler too."

"Oh, not my muffler, Mum! It looks so silly in the summer."

"You won't leave this house without it," she said firmly.

"Oh, all right," he grumbled. "Don't let's have a row about it."

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confronted him with a grim expression. They were not on amicable terms.

"Hgh! So you're at home for a change!" was her opening remark.

"Good evening, Mrs. Trap," he said dully. "Mum's just finishing tea."

She sailed through to the kitchen, took one look at her friend and then turned on Len.

"You cruel, wicked, ungrateful lout!" she exclaimed. "So you've broken down your mother again!"

Mrs. Burrows clutched at her arm. "No, no, it's all over now, Bertha."

"Well, I'll be pushing off," mumbled Len. "Strong, Mum." He gave her a peck on the cheek.

"Enjoy yourself, Len." She pressed her handkerchief to her mouth, as he left the room hurriedly.

Mrs. Trap shook her head and clicked her tongue.

"The more I see of that lad of yours, the surrier I am for you, Mavis."

"He can be such a good boy when he wants," said Mrs. Burrows weakly with a sniff.

"Of course he's driving you into your grave." There was the faintest note of anticipation in this statement. Mrs. Trap was a shining example of free enterprise in the undertaking world. She ran her business single-handed and had recently bought her own hearse.

"He'll be the first to go unless he looks after himself better," retorted Mrs. Burrows with unexpected asperity. "Will you have a cuppa, dear?"

"Thanks, Mavis, I don't mind. I've had a hard day."

"Have you been attending to Mrs. Gravel?"

"I have, dear. You must pop along and see the remains tomorrow. I'm quite proud of them. I can tell you."

"Can't say I like seeing corpses I've known," said Mrs. Burrows with a sniff.

"I'm sure Mr. Gravel would be bucked if you dropped in," she said. "He's very satisfied with my work. He insisted on having the body taken down to the front parlor. She opened her handbag and drew out a folded copy of an undertakers' trade paper. "By the way, I got a two-line write-up in 'The Coffin' last week. They sent round a reporter to see old Mrs. Clement."

"I haven't got my glasses, dear," said Mrs. Burrows. "Read it to me, will you?"

Mrs. Trap proudly recited her notice, which appeared in a column headed "In Brief."

"Mrs. Bertha Trap is adding fresh laurels to her reputation with some original and dignified poses in 'East London.'"

"Well, that's nice!" commented Mrs. Burrows.

"It is, dear. I can tell you, I'm very proud." Mrs. Trap's expression was one of smug complacency.

At this moment, Len burst into the room, hot and breathless in his rain-coat and muffler.

"I've forgotten my money, Mum. Can I have it?"

"What money, dear?" Mrs. Burrows asked.

"Why, my 'going-out' money, of course! You remember I gave it to you to look after."

"Oh, yes, I'll get it for you in a minute, dear."

He looked desperately at the clock. "Oh, please can I have it quickly! I'm going to be terribly late!"

"How much is it?" asked Mrs. Trap grimly.

"Twelve bob," he answered.

She opened her handbag. "I'll give it to you, and your poor mother can pay me back before I go."

"Far ever so, Mrs. Trap!" he exclaimed, momentarily forgetting his dislike of her.

"I'm not doing it for you," she said,

SUDDENLY tears welled up into her eyes.

"I'm sure I don't want a row! I'm only thinking of your good, Len. I don't expect thanks for all I do for you, but I do wish you'd be a bit more sunny." She choked. "I do my best to be a good mother to you, Len, but I get nothing but black looks and cross words from you. Oh, why can't you be more sunny?"

Len moved round behind her chair as she burst into a flood of tears. He felt guilty and miserable. He dreaded these scenes, which always seemed to take place just as he was going out and usually lasted about a quarter of an hour. This one was no exception to the rule. For ten minutes Mrs. Burrows wept copiously, breaking off now and again to catalogue the various occasions when he had hurt her feelings since the last row. He was unable to argue, and so he merely stood beside her, patting her shoulder occasionally and repeating miserably, "Don't take on so, Mum. I'm sorry I didn't mean it."

The scene ended in a reconciliation drenched in nauseating sentimentality. Slobbering kisses were exchanged, promises of exemplary behaviour from Len vied of eternal self-sacrifice from his mother.

The front-door bell rang loudly.

She dabbed her eyes quickly with the edge of the tablecloth. "That's Mrs. Trap," she said. "Let her in there's a dear."

He went to the front door and opened it. Mrs. Trap, naive and moustached,

handing him the money. "I'm doing it to save your poor mother's legs."

He pocketed the money and with a brief "Cheerbye" rushed out again. The two women shook their heads and clicked their tongues.

Jenny Lane's home was a very happy one. She lived in a red, semi-detached villa whose back windows overlooked the recreation ground. She had twin brothers, aged eleven, and a thirteen-year-old sister, named Patsy. The Lanes were a noisy, cheerful family.

Shortly before Len called for Jenny, they were all to be found in the sitting-room. Patsy, who was pretty and fair-haired, was trying to persuade Jenny to do her homework for her; the twins were kneeling in a corner mending the television set; Detective-Sergeant Lane was pursuing his postal-tuition piano-playing course; Mrs. Lane was operating a sewing-machine and talking at the top of her voice—she was an attractive little woman of great energy.

"That hen wants taking up a bit," she observed to Jenny, who was wearing a new skirt of green linen with a white shirt. "Still, I suppose it's too late to do anything about it now. What time is the boy calling round for you, pet?"

"He should have been here a quarter-of-an-hour ago," Jenny answered unconcernedly. "Oh Patsy, I can't do any more of these beastly sums. Coo, I'm glad I'm not at school now. I say Dad, you've nearly learnt to play the piano! I can recognise the tune—Alexander's Ragtime Band, right?"

"The Moonlight Sonata," he answered, swinging round on his stool. He was a fair, well-built man with a high forehead and a humorous mouth. "For being cheeky you can come and sing."

"All right," she answered. "Now let's see, how many tunes have you learnt so far?" She ticked them off on her fingers. "Dinah, The National Anthem, Land Of Hope And Glory, Around The Marble Arch, and The Bells of St. Mary. Hm! I think I'll settle for The Bells."

One of the freckle-faced twins looked up. "For heaven's sake, can't we ever have a little peace in this house?"

His father and sister ignored him. When Jenny began to sing, Mrs. Lane stopped turning her sewing-machine; Patsy pushed aside her homework and rested her chin in her hands. At the end of the song, they clapped hard.

Jenny patted her father on the back. "Well done, Dad! You ought to be a professional accompanist instead of a coal!"

"When I've finished this course—and there's only one more lesson to go—I've a good mind to learn another instrument," he said.

His wife laughed. "Better choose the triangle—they're cheap."

"Why not try the harp?" asked Jenny brightly. "I met a girl at the Club on Monday who said she could play the harp. You could get her along to give you a few lessons."

His expression suddenly changed.

"What sort of a girl was she, Jen?"

"Ooh, she was Luv-ely! You'd fall for her, Dad."

"Be serious, Jen, what did she look like?"

"Well . . . she was tall, and blonde and I'd say she was about twenty-one. And she had lovely big blue eyes and she dressed as though she had a thousand-a-year dress allowance. But I must say she wasn't a bit stuck up—I liked her very much."

"What the boys would call 'smashing,' eh?"

"That's right."

"Sounds like the same girl," he murmured.

"Is she wanted?"

"No, not exactly. As a matter of fact, it's rather a curious business."

"I thought it was very funny she should be at our dance; she didn't look the sort of person who usually goes to a youth club hop."

"Who invited her?"

"The boy I'm going out with tonight—Len Burrows. He's an assistant in that junk shop near the Sun-tan place."

Her father gave a low whistle. "Maybe old Webman isn't going off his head after all."

"Listen, Jen, you can do a bit of detective work yourself this evening. Try to find out more about the girl from Burrows. By the way, how long have you known him?"

"Let me think . . . Oh I honestly can't remember. Dad! He's just one of those people you see around. He's asked me to go out with him several times, but he's a bit of a rawnp."

"Why did you change your mind when he asked you out this time?"

"Oh I dunno, he was at this dance, you see, and really he wasn't too bad. Her father gave her a shrewd glance and his lips twitched.

"Any idea where he lives?"

"Can't say I have. I expect he told me, but I've forgotten."

"Never mind, I'll have a look in at Webman's shop tomorrow."

Patsy, who was gazing out of the window, suddenly exclaimed, "There's an awful queer-looking fellow coming down the road now."

Jenny went to the window and looked out. Len was hurrying along the opposite pavement, occasionally pausing to glance at the numbers on the front-gates. He did look rather curious; his hair was on end and his face was very hot and flushed. Despite the fact that the rain had stopped, he still wore his raincoat, which was very much too short for him, and a purple muffler was wound tightly round his neck.

"That's Len!" said Jenny shortly.

"Can't think what you see in him!" exclaimed Patsy. "I'd be ashamed to be seen out with a mess like that."

"You'll be lucky if you're seen out with anyone."

Mrs. Lane asked, "Are you going to bring him in here, pet?"

"I don't think so, Mum. He's rather shy, and well, we are a bit of a crowd. She picked up her green handbag off the table and crossed quickly to the door. "Goodnight, everybody!"

"Have a good time," said her father.

When she got outside the front door, Len was crossing the road some thirty yards beyond the house.

"Her, Len!" she called.

He turned quickly, stood motionless for a moment, then came trotting towards her.

"Hallo," she said.

"Hallo, Jenny."

This was the moment which he had pictured so many times in his day-dreams. For one whole evening, Jenny was going to be his companion. Never had he seen her look more attractive; in one glance he took in the details of her appearance: the little bow in her curly hair, the freckles on her tip-tilted nose, the brightness of her eyes, the cool green of her full skirt, her slim bare ankles, and her pink toes fidgeting beneath the white straps of her sandals.

"Do you think it's going to rain?" she asked.

He flushed even more deeply, feeling that he should have made the first remark.

"No, I think the rains finished," he said. "Jenny, I'm terribly sorry I'm late."

"You're not very," she smiled. "We'll only miss a bit of the second-feature and I'm told it stinks."

"The Guv kept me late at the shop," he lied.

"Sometimes my boss does," she said gaily. "Come on, let's be going."

He could think of very little to say as they walked to the cinema. On Monday evening, he had felt completely at ease with her, but now everything was different. He was acutely conscious of the shabby old raincoat, which he had grown out of, and the purple muffler knitted by his mother. They seemed to hedge in his personality, forbidding self-expression.

As Jenny walked beside him with quick short steps, she hummed a little tune to herself, occasionally breaking off to make some remark about films or the Club, but she found it impossible to start a conversation. He answered her in monosyllables, seeming to be entirely pre-occupied with secret thoughts which were causing him serious embarrassment. By the time they reached the Palace, she was regretting having accepted his invitation.

He bought two-and-sixpenny seats and they went up into the circle. He did not enjoy the programme, for he was suffering from acute indigestion. Throughout the first feature, he kept glancing at the faintly illuminated clock, his mind tortured by the possibility that he would not be able to face eating supper at the Caf.

There was every indication of the evening ending in humiliation, for he would have to say to Jenny, "I'm terribly sorry, but I'm not feeling too well. I think I'll have to go home." What a fool he had been not to take some indigestion tablets before leaving the house!

He found himself unable to concentrate on the picture, which was in color with a lot of music, and afterwards he was left with a very blurred impression of it.

"It was smashing, wasn't it?" said Jenny when they came out. Her face was still flushed with enjoyment.

"Not too bad," he mumbled.

She looked at him quickly.

"Are you feeling all right, Len?"

He was about to make his carefully rehearsed apology when he saw Steve Howell come up from the stalls. Steve was a habitual sufferer from indigestion and carried a bottle of tablets around with him.

"Jenny, wait for me by the door, will you?" Len asked her urgently. "I've just seen a chap I've got an important message for."

"All right," she answered amiably.

He intercepted his friend and drew him aside, muttering, "Got to have a word with you, chum."

"What's up?" asked Steve. "Struth, are you with Jenny Lane?"

"Yeah."

"How do you persuade these dames to come out with you? What've you got that I haven't?"

"I've got shocking indigestion at the moment. Be a pal and give me a couple of your 'thingummies'."

Steve readily obliged.

"Thanks, chum," said Len, crushing the tablets in his mouth and swallowing them. "You've saved my life."

He hurried across to the swing-doors into the street. Jenny was standing just outside, talking to a couple of youths, named Lennox and Peterson, who invariably wore long beige jackets with padded shoulders and dazzling American ties. Len was not the only one who suspected them of being members of the cash gang, which had been so active in the neighborhood of late. He wondered if Jenny knew of their unsavory reputations.

When he came up to her, she turned to him and said, "Len, these two want to join us for supper at the Caf." Her voice was quiet and dispassionate; it gave him no clue to her real feelings.

But because he had a crushing inferiority complex, he imagined that she wanted their company.

Lennox, a dark wiry youth, stroked his crew-cut hair and grinned at Len. "Mind if we string along with you, sport?"

Len was about to give a weak assent when suddenly for the second time in the past two days the spirit of rebellion leapt within him.

Why should he allow the whole of his evening to be spoiled? What had he to lose by telling them to go to blazes?—for after his tongue-tied silence on the way to the cinema, Jenny must surely be bored stiff with him. She wouldn't come out with him again anyway and he might just as well try to have some fun for his money.

Lennox noted Len's hesitation and his eyes narrowed slightly.

"Well, what'd you say, sport?"

"I don't think so, not this evening," he answered firmly. "Jenny and I have important things to discuss."

Lennox did not look at all pleased, but said "That's okay, sport! That's okay!" He winked at Jenny. "Be seen' you, sweetheart."

"Good night," she said quietly.

No sooner were Lennox and Peterson out of earshot than Len said, "Sorry about that, Jenny. I expect you'd have liked them with us."

"I would not!" she exclaimed abruptly. "Len, I was thankful when you said you didn't want them. But as they're great friends of yours—"

"But they're not! I can't stand the sight of them."

"I should have guessed it! But that Lennox said you were his greatest pal and I didn't know what to think. Oh Len, I'm glad they're not with us. Those two give me the shivers." She slipped her arm through his and by doing so carried him up into dizzy heights. His indignation had gone, he had acted with firmness and won Jenny's respect. The evening was going to be a success, for his shyness had vanished.

They found a corner table in the Caf, but Jenny said she didn't want supper. They decided to have just coffee and biscuits.

"Now what about these things we've got to discuss?" she asked when the waitress had taken their order. "You sounded awfully serious, Len."

He laughed. "I felt I had to say something to make Lennox and Peterson realise they weren't wanted."

"I'd like to discuss you," she said.

"I'd like to know all about you."

"Me? That's not very important."

"I'm terribly inquisitive—especially about people who ask me out for the evening. Now you can tell me something I've been dying to know. What was the name of that lovely girl you were with on Monday?"

He hesitated and then answered, "The truth is, I don't know, Jenny."

She looked at him incredulously. "But you must do! I mean she didn't just appear out of the blue!"

"That is exactly what she did do."

He did not want to begin his friendship with Jenny by telling her, and so he gave her an entirely truthful account of his first meeting with the Angel and the subsequent developments. From the way he related the astonishing facts she could tell he wasn't making up the story. She was amused.

"It's the strangest thing I've ever heard," she commented when he had finished. "If I were ten years younger I'd think she was an angel."

Len shifted uncomfortably.

"It's crossed my mind she might be."

"Oh Len, you can't believe that!"

"Not really," he said hastily, fearing that she might doubt his sanity. "After

all, she's done nothing supernatural. I mean I haven't seen her take off into the air or anything."

They both laughed.

"All the same, it's ever so weird," she said. "I'd love to know who she is and where she comes from. Mind you, I think she's very nice, but she gave me a funny sort of feeling."

"How'd you mean?"

"Well, it's difficult to explain . . . I felt as though I might have been talking to the Queen or someone."

"That's it! That's just how I felt!"

he exclaimed. "Though, mind you, I wouldn't tell the Queen some of the things I told her."

"What things?"

"Oh nothing much." He paused. "Jenny, I think you're just as wonderful as her . . . more so, in a different way."

She laughed at his naivety, but at that moment she saw something in him which no girl had ever seen before, and the laughter died on her lips. Suddenly she realised that his eyes were full of gentleness, a quite unexpected strength, and sadness too. She was seeing through the veil of his superficial self, which was not really him at all, to his real self, and she felt a strange, strong excitement rising inside her. In a brief instant, he became important to her. Now she really did want to know all about him.

"I like you," she stated simply. "I wish we'd gone out together before now."

"Oh Jenny . . . You'll come out with me again?"

"If you want me to."

"You're not . . . you're not engaged, or anything?"

She shook her head with a gentle smile. "I'm only eighteen."

"I'm twenty."

"Have you always lived here?"

"Since I was three. When Dad was alive we used to live at Woolwich. What about you?"

"My family moved from Gravesend three years ago."

"I—I think I fell in love with you, Jenny, the first time I saw you." He hesitated. "Do you mind me falling in love?" He waited breathlessly for her reply, remembering the glossy answer given by Palace film-heroines: "Don't care for me too much: I'd hate you to be hurt."

BUT she shook her head slowly and said, "Why should I, Len?" and took his hand under the table.

For a few moments they sat in silence. Then she asked, "Are you always going to work in a junk shop, Len?"

"You bet I'm not! I'm going into the Navy—into submarines!"

"Good! I've always wanted a boy-friend who's a sailor. I'll knit sweaters for you."

"You will?" he exclaimed delightedly. "And scarves, maybe, but I'm afraid they won't be purple ones."

"My Mum knitted that one for me. You must meet Mum: I bet you'll get on terribly well together."

"I'd like to meet her," said Jenny.

When they came out of the Caf half an hour later thin rain was falling. He made her put on his coat. The rain was deceptively light and by the time they reached the Lavers' house his "best blue" was drenched.

"Oh Len, you're soaked!" she said, feeling the dampness of his jacket as they halted by the gate. "You'll get into awful trouble with your Mum!"

"I don't care!" he said.

"Well, put your coat on quickly now."

"Jenny, when are we going to see each other again?"

"Soon, I hope."

"Tomorrow?"

"I can't tomorrow, I'm afraid."

"Friday?"

"I've promised to sing at a police concert."

"On crumbs!" he sighed. "I suppose you're bound to be going out with another fellow on Saturday."

"Yes, but not in the afternoon. I was going to play tennis with Patay and the Twins, but they can find a fourth."

"Good!" he said. "Shall I call round for you at two?"

"Yes, that'll be all right," she answered eagerly. "What shall we do?"

"I don't mind. Anything?"

"Well, we can see what the weather's like and decide when we meet."

He put his hands on her shoulders and drew her against him, feeling the soft warmth of her skin beneath the thin shirt she was wearing.

"I must go in," she whispered.

"Yes of course!" he exclaimed. "I was forgetting the rain."

She tilted up her face. He bent forward and kissed her with clumsy gentleness on the cheek.

Then with a light touch on his arm, she turned and ran indoors.

It was after half-past twelve when Len got home, but his mother was waiting up for him. He found her sitting at the kitchen table writing a letter. As soon as he entered the room, the wonder of the last few hours faded. He felt like a small child who for the first time in his life has known the carefree joy of playing in a sun-drenched orchard, only to return to a dismal home ruled by strict parental discipline which seeks to enforce a complete surrender of the spirit.

"Hallo, Mum," he said in a low, tired voice. "Fraid I got a bit wet."

She looked at him in silence for several seconds, her eyes brightening with martyred anger, as she observed the deplorable state of his "best blue," which perhaps would never be the same again, since the dye was running out of the cheap material, leaving blotches on the ill-fitting coat and baggy, sodden trousers.

"Oh Len!" She pulled out a handkerchief and pressed it to her mouth. "You'd better get out of those things," she said in a broken voice.

"Sorry, Mum!" he muttered. "It goes upstairs right away."

"Oh no, you won't, Len! Ah afternoon I've slaved at the lino to get a polish on it, and I'm not having it dripped over now. Take your clothes off here."

Meekly he obeyed her.

She hurried out of the room and returned a few moments later with his pyjamas and her old overcoat with a mole-skin collar which he now used as a dressing-gown. He hated that coat with all his heart; each time he put it on, which was only when he had to, he experienced the same nausea as he had felt when as a small boy she had punished him by making him wear a girl's gym tunic for an hour or two.

By the time she had prepared his hot drink, he felt utterly crushed and wretched. She watched him in silence as he sipped the drink, never taking her eyes off his face. When he had finished, she said in a toneless voice, "I'm not going to ask you how you got soaked. I don't want to hear. But it's only right you should know I'm on the verge of giving it all up."

"Giving all what up? What do you mean, Mum?" As he awaited her answer, he experienced a sudden panic and a desperate need of her. He felt he could no more get along without his mother than he could without a heart. His love for her was strangely, cruelly engraved in him.

There was the accustomed gleam of

martyrdom in her eyes as she answered, "I'm thinking of selling the house."

"But Mum, you can't do that? Where would we live? What would we do?" "I haven't thought yet," she said.

He sprang up, knocking over his chair.

"I know what you're going to say, Len. You're going to say you're sorry. Well, I'm sorry, too, but it may be too late. I've got to think. I've got to work things out in my mind. I don't think it's all your fault that you treat your home as a lodging-house and me as a slave. After all, you've got your father's blood in you. But I can't stand any more tonight." She gulped.

"But Mum—"

She called out chokingly, "Go to bed, Len."

He left the room. As he slowly ascended the stairs to his bedroom, he experienced an icy coldness which seemed to bite into his bones. He gathered his mother's coat tighter about him.

Len was behind the counter, when on Thursday morning Parker breezed into the shop. Len eyed him curiously, for it was not often that such a flashy-looking personage came in. Today, Parker was wearing a grey check suit with a carnation in his buttonhole, and the shamrock tie from Ned's factory.

"Morning, old man," he said, rubbing his hands together. "Is Mr. Webman in?"

"Morning," answered Len, "yes, he's in his office. Have you got an appointment with him?"

"Sort of, old man. Sort of. I met him in the Red Lion the other night and he invited me to blow in and have a deck at his musical instruments sometime."

"Oh, yes," said Len, "he did mention meeting you, so I sorted out a few instruments for you to see." He pointed to a table close to the door.

"Thanks," said Parker, walking across to the table.

"Are you looking for any particular sort of instrument?"

"No, anything which is in good condition, though of course brass and drums are my main line." He picked up a trombone and examined it. "We sell a lot of stuff to the Boy Scouts and Church Lads."

Len said, "I'll fetch the boss."

A moment later, Mr. Webman entered the shop, his head thrust forward and his glasses on the end of his nose.

"Good morning, Mr. Parker," he said, coming round from behind the counter. "Oh, hallo, old man," said Parker. "How much do you want for this trom?"

"Three pounds ten," answered Mr. Webman. "It's in almost brand new condition."

"Almost, eh? I can see time goes faster for you than it does for me."

"Three pounds ten," repeated Mr. Webman stubbornly.

"Thirty bob," snapped Parker.

"Sixty," countered Mr. Webman.

Parker lifted the trombone to his lips and blew it.

"Thirty-five."

"Fifty-five."

"Forty."

"Forty-three."

"Forty-two."

"And sixpence."

"I'll have it," said Parker with a faint shrug. He stroked his big moustache, eyeing the other instruments on the table, then he tapped one of two kettle-drums.

"Beaters are rusty," he said.

"But the skins are in superb condition," retorted Mr. Webman. "You won't find skins like those on new drums today."

"How much?"

"Twenty each."

"Thirty the pair."

"Thirty-six."

"Thirty-two."

"Thirty-four."

"Thirty-three and sixpence."

"Ninapence."

"Sixpence."

"Done!" said Mr. Webman quietly.

Parker picked up a "C Melody" saxophone and fiddled with the stops for a few moments. Then he lifted it to his lips and blew a scale.

"Been bashed about a bit," he commented.

"It's a very good make."

"I'll take your word for it, old man."

"Five pounds."

"You throw in these two bugles and I'll pay it you then."

"Seven the lot."

"Five-ten."

"Six."

"Five-fifteen."

"Ninapence."

"Sixpence."

"Eightpence."

"Penny for goodwill."

"Done!" said Mr. Webman.

"Let's see, how much have I spent so far?" asked Parker, and without a pause answered his own question. "Nine pounds, eight and a penny."

"You're three-and-sixpence out," Mr. Webman retorted promptly.

"Am I, old man?" said Parker mildly.

"Why, that's right. Sorry!"

During the next few minutes, he spent another four pounds, and then he said he had finished.

Mr. Webman rubbed his hands together.

"I like a nice lively bit of bargaining," he said.

"Oh, so do I," agreed Parker.

"It's becoming a lost art."

"That's right. And by jiminy, you know the drill, old man."

Mr. Webman, who had taken rather a fancy to his new client and thought they might possibly be able to do further business together at some future date, asked him whether he would care to step into the office and have a cup of tea.

"Thanks, old man," answered Parker. "Bargaining always gives me a thirst."

As they left the shop, he said, "I'll write you a cheque."

"I'd rather have cash if you don't mind," said Mr. Webman.

"Just as you like," answered Parker without rancour.

I

N the office, the musical teapot was tinkling merrily. Mr. Webman had been about to have his elevenpence when Len had summoned him into the shop. He silenced the pot, poured Parker a cup of tea and handed it to him.

"Thanks," Parker was gazing round the room with frank curiosity. "Here, what about all these musical-boxes? I'll take a few of them off you."

"No, you won't. They're not for sale."

"In pop?"

"My hobby; I collect them."

"D'you just sit and listen to them?"

"Oh, no! Most of these were broken when I bought them."

"You get a kick out of repairing 'em?"

"That's right. You've no idea how complicated some of them are."

He touched the Fawcett box which stood on the table. "Take this one, for instance, I've been nearly a week repairing it."

He pressed the starting-lever and the jangling strains of "Twankydllo" filled the room. The clank had gone.

For a few moments the two men stared down at the instrument in

silence while they drank their tea, then Mr. Webman switched it off.

"Yes, I can understand it must be an interesting hobby," said Parker. "Have you ever bought one which has got you beat?"

"No, I always fix them sooner or later," answered Mr. Webman. "But some of them are real teasers." He walked over to the glass show-case and, opening it, took out a small pear-shaped gold case which was deeply dented. "This one gave me a lot of trouble; the works were very badly damaged and it is very old. As a matter of fact, it has a strange history. It belonged to a French aristocrat who was guillotined during the Revolution."

"Go on!" exclaimed Parker.

"Yes, really, it's quite genuine. A friend bought it for me at a Paris sale and its history was well-authenticated. It was taken by one of the prison guards and handed down from father to son until it came into the sale room."

Mr. Webman wound up the instrument and pressed a knob. It played a melodious little tune so softly that it sounded like the steps of a fairy dancing on a spinet.

"That was the last music heard by a man who a few minutes later was taken out and pitched into a tumbrel," he said.

"Gives me the shivers," rejoined Parker. "Personally I'd rather have a luke-box every time."

Mr. Webman replaced the instrument in the case.

"If ever you come across an interesting musical-box during your travels, drop me a line and I may buy it off you—if it's cheap."

"Okay, I'll remember," said Parker. He drained his cup and glanced at his watch. "Well, I must be getting along."

"Thirteen pounds eleven and sevenpence," Mr. Webman reminded him.

He took out his wallet.

"Can you change me a couple of ten pound notes?"

"I hope so," replied Mr. Webman.

He handed him the notes. Mr. Webman took them across to the window and spent several seconds carefully examining them.

Parker gave a guffaw.

"You don't take any chances, do you, old man?"

"I can't afford to," answered Mr. Webman quietly. "No offence meant."

"And none taken."

"When they went back into the shop, Mr. Webman asked Parker whether he was going to take the instruments with him."

"No, I'll send the van tomorrow. Cheerio, old man."

"Good day to you."

Parker started walking towards the door. Then suddenly he halted. His gaze was fixed on the Angel's harp which stood in an alcove, partly concealed by some miscellaneous pieces of furniture.

"Is that the harp you were speaking of the other evening?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Mr. Webman.

"Mind if I have a look at it?"

"Go ahead."

They pushed the furniture aside and Parker carefully examined the instrument. He ran his fingers right round the woodwork, tried the pedals and twanged the strings several times.

The tone sounded harsh and flat—very different from when the Angel played it. However, apparently it pleased Parker.

"Well, I'm flattered!" he murmured. "Ugh!"

After getting down on his knees and examining the base of the instrument, he looked up and spoke in a tone of concealed excitement.

"This harp is . . . er—rather a good

one, y'know. Worth a bit more than the ordinary harp."

Mr. Webman's eyes lit up.

"How much more?" he asked.

Parker rubbed his chin thoughtfully. Then he said, "I'll give you fifty quid down for it now."

"I can't sell it yet. It's in pawn."

"I'll be quite honest with you, old man, I heard you talking about it in the pub the other evening just before I asked for a light. You said you handed out twenty quid on it to a bit of fluff who didn't wait for her ticket—"

"She wasn't fluff," cut in Mr. Webman.

"All right, she wasn't. But when she comes back—or rather if she comes back—you say that a bloke has offered you fifty-two quid for it, and that you'll give her fifty for it. Bet you she'll jump at it. Then I'll pay you sixty and you'll be a tanner to the good. Fair enough, eh?"

"Seventy!" said Mr. Webman, whose bargaining instincts had momentarily got the better of him.

"Sixty-five!" countered Parker.

"Eighty!"

"Seventy!"

"Seventy-ten!"

"Done!" cried Parker.

But Mr. Webman shook his head slowly.

"No, my friend. It is not done. I can't promise anything."

"Well, you think it over. And if you've anything to report by Saturday you'll find me in the Red Lion at eight o'clock."

"I expect I'll be along there in any case."

"Good! Well, once again, cheerio!"

"Good day."

As soon as Parker had left the shop, Mr. Webman went straight to the harp and made a thorough search for a maker's name on it. But he could find no trace of one. He then went back to his office and hastily turned the pages of a London telephone directory. He was looking for the number of a certain Mr. Stillvane whom he had encountered at sales on a few occasions.

Stillvane was a Bond Street man but he had something in common with Mr. Webman, for he, too, was a keen muboxodist. In fact Mr. Webman had to admit that Stillvane knew more about the value of musical-boxes than he did. However, it was not in connection with his hobby that he now wished to get in touch with him. Stillvane was reputed to be one of the foremost harp-experts in London.

Having found the number, he went to the telephone and dialled. A few seconds later, he heard Stillvane's suave voice on the line.

"Good morning, Mr. Stillvane," he said. "This is Mr. Webman speaking."

"Who?"

"Mr. Webman. You may remember we've met at one or two sales recently; I am a muboxodist."

"Of yes, of course! I'm so sorry—I didn't catch the name." Mr. Stillvane now sounded quite enthusiastic. "What can I do for you?"

"I'm wondering if I could trouble you to have a look at a harp which I have here. I have reason to suppose it is a very good one, but I know nothing about harps."

"Yes, I shall be delighted to come and see it. Of course I shall have to make a small charge for giving my professional opinion."

"Yes, naturally," Mr. Webman said rather lamely.

"Would you like me to call round this afternoon?"

"Ah, I'm afraid not. Most unfortunately I have to go to a very important sale."

"Where?" asked Mr. Stillvane sharply.

But Mr. Webman realised he had

already made a slip which might cost him a very rare musical Mettlach Stein.

"It's not a Muboxodist sale," he answered casually. "Now I must say that I would like you to value this harp as soon as possible. Could you manage sometime tomorrow?"

"Y-yes, I think I could. Would twelve o'clock suit you?"

"That would suit me fine."

"Very well, I'll be along then. Now can you tell me where your place is? Am I right in thinking it's in Knightsbridge?"

Stillvane sounded rather put-off when he learnt that Mr. Webman's shop was in an East End suburb, but he did not try to cancel the appointment.

After ringing off, Mr. Webman poured himself a glass of port.

"What kind of a mug does that Mr. Parker think I am?" he chuckled to himself. "I think we'll find that harp is rather more valuable than sixty pounds."

BEFORE Mr. Webman went off to the sale, he reminded Len to take down any telephone messages which might come through while he was out. Len was apt to be rather absent-minded over the telephone. On one occasion when Mr. Webman was not in, a dealer had rung up about an important music-box which had unexpectedly come on to the market. Len had clean forgotten to tell Mr. Webman about it, with the result that the box was secured by Hewson. It had been touch and go whether Len was sacked when his employer found out what had happened.

Although there were few customers during the first hour Len was left on his own, he had plenty to occupy his time, for that morning he had discovered amongst a pile of books a paper-backed volume entitled Tibetan Knowledge and Exercises. Its author, an exiled Lama, promised his readers nothing less than "The key to a great storehouse of atomic energy." "The mystic insights of the East," "A brilliant intellect" and "great personal charm."

Having read the preface, Len could almost feel a new power beginning to course through his veins, and reaching his first exercise he felt that he really must try it out without delay.

He crossed quickly to the shop-window and looked out. Light rain was falling and the street was empty. He felt that he was unlikely to be interrupted if he practised Exercise One which was named, "Atomic Relaxation." It sounded quite easy; you had to kneel on the floor, bury your head in your arms and inhale "Prana," which is a sort of mysterious essence in the air. At the same time you had to repeat aloud to yourself various slogans such as, "Dynamic Prana is flowing into me," "I am completely and utterly relaxed," and "Nothing can stand in the way of my success and happiness."

Having memorised two of these slogans, Len knelt behind the counter, relaxed as far as was able to and sniffed in Prana for all he was worth. After a few moments he was quite sure the exercise was doing him good. The air of the shop seemed less musty and he began to feel quite apart from the cares of this world.

He was so entranced that when he heard a sweet voice above him say, "It is nice to relax, isn't it?" he thought at first that he must be listening to the voice of his innermost self, but when the voice continued, "I don't want to interrupt you, but I'm wondering if it would be all right for me to take away my harp," he leapt to his feet with a

startled cry. On the other side of the counter stood the Angel.

"Goah, miss, I didn't hear you come in!" he exclaimed shrilly.

"You were so busy repeating your slogans," she said with a gentle smile. "I'm afraid I've stopped you having a wonderful time."

"That's all right, miss," he said, smoothing down his hair. "I was just doing a Tibetan exercise. Very interesting it is too, but Mr. Webman would be pretty mad if he knew I was doing it in business hours."

"One can learn a lot from Tibet," she said simply.

"Seems like it!" He began to feel less rattled. "Now, miss, did you say something about your harp?"

"Yes, my extra money arrived sooner than I expected it to, and so I can repay the loan."

"Oh, crumbs!" said Len. "That won't please the Guy."

"But I've come back a day before I said I would!"

"I know, but you see he wanted to have a word with you. He's out at present."

"How very disappointing! I wished to thank him for all his kindness to me."

"Perhaps you could look in again sometime?"

"I don't know," she said doubtfully. "I've decided to move into the West End of London."

"Can't say I blame you."

She handed him an envelope saying, "I think you'll find that correct."

"Thank you, miss." He tore it open and checked the notes and change inside. The sum was absolutely correct; it included the interest on the loan worked out to the nearest farthing according to the standard rates laid down by law. "Thank you, miss," he repeated.

"Did Mr. Webman want to talk to me about anything special?" she asked him as he put the money into the till.

"Well, yes, he did," answered Len. "You see, miss, it seems your harp is a very fine one. A gent who knows about harps was in this morning and he took a fancy to it. The Guy was going to ask you if you'd think of parting with it."

For a moment, her face became very serious. "Oh, no, I'm sorry, that would be quite out of the question." Her tone made Len feel that the very suggestion was highly improper.

"Oh, of course, I understand," he said quickly. "But I had to tell you, because the Guy will ask me if I did when he gets back."

She nodded slowly.

"Well, miss, I'm sorry we shan't be seeing you again, but I can understand you wanting to move on sooner than a bit more inconvenience."

"It's just that I want to see as much as possible during my holiday. You see I haven't got long and it may be hard before I'm able to visit London again."

"Listen, miss," said Len suddenly. "What about having a cup of tea before you go? There's something I want to ask you over as badly."

"But surely you can't leave the shop?"

"Oh, no! But the Guy has got a message to his office and he's got to make a cup of tea for himself when he's out. Won't you stay for a few minutes?"

She hesitated, then nodded her head.

"Thank you, Len, I'd like to."

"Oh, boy! I'll go and put the kettle on."

Then he returned from the office he found that the Angel had pulled her harp into the centre of the room and was carefully examining it.

"Someone has been meddling with it." There was the slightest trace of irritation in her voice.

"Well, yes, that's so," answered Len. "The chap who came in this morning fiddled about with it."

The Angel made no comment. She tightened a few of the strings.

"Miss, as I was saying a moment ago, there's something I want to ask you."

"Oh, yes, of course!"

"Would you like to sit while we're waiting for the kettle to boil?" He picked up a chair from behind the counter and set it down for her.

"Thank you so much," she said.

"I—er—I had a dream about you last night, miss." His voice was filled with embarrassment, but he found reassurance in her expression.

She did not look in the least surprised.

"Tell me about it," she said.

"I think I'd better start from the beginning. Yesterday evening, I took out Jenny."

"Oh, yes, we met her at the dance and you talked about her afterwards. She's a charming girl—so fresh and sweet!"

"Well, we had a smashing evening—at least, the last part was smashing when we were having a bite at the Caf and then when we walked back to her home in the rain. I—er—I'm in love with her."

"Splendid!"

His brows contracted in a frown. "But I don't know that I should feel the way I do about her. It was like this: when I got home, my Mum was still up and she gave me a terrible time because the rain had spoilt my suit. And I felt—oh, this is very difficult to explain—I felt there was something bad inside me."

"You mean you'd eaten something which disagreed with you?"

"Oh, no—at least, earlier on as-a-matter-of-fact I had—but no, it wasn't the whole. He drew a deep breath and spoke slowly. "I felt it was wrong of me to love anybody more than my Mum."

"Ah, now I'm beginning to understand!"

"Just before I went up to bed, she flew right off the handle and said she might be going to sell our home. I've never felt more frightened in my life. Well, I went to sleep and I had this funny sort of a dream—"

"Dreams aren't funny—they're serious!" she interrupted him quietly.

"Look here, miss, do you think there's anything in dreams? Do you think they can be . . . well, trying to tell one things?"

"Of course they can! If everybody studied their dreams and allowed themselves to be guided by them, this world would be a different place."

"Well, this was it: I was sailing on the River in a canoe and with me was a nice little kid—a boy—whose age was about three. Then suddenly he dropped his paddle overboard and then the River turned into a lake and the water got terribly rough. The canoe spun round and round in a kind of vortex while we tried to get back the paddle. But we couldn't. Then a police launch turned up and took us on board."

"The next thing I knew was that I was in the Palace and I was going to be married. There were pews, like in a church, and organ music and all. It was very magnificent. But this is the strange part: I wasn't going to be married to Jenny. I was going to be married to you!" He broke off and looked at her anxiously to see how she took this revelation.

"Please, continue," she said quietly.

"However, we didn't get married in the end—"

"Did you want to marry me, very much?"

"Yes. But a very fine old chap with a long white beard came up to me and

I kind of knew he was very wise and very good. And he asked me if I knew the responses in the marriage service. Well, I didn't. Then he said, 'Until you learn at least one response you can't get married.' After that, I woke up."

He looked at the Angel hopefully. "The wise old man was quite right," she said. "You must learn the responses."

He scratched his head. "That doesn't help me much! And anyway, I wouldn't have the darn cheek in real life as to be thinking of marrying you, miss! It doesn't make sense!"

"On the contrary, there's enough information in that dream to change your whole life," she said. "But I can only give you this advice, Len." She regarded him with the utmost seriousness. "You must find your father, because when you've discovered him you'll have learnt one of the vital responses."

"But my Dad's dead! He died when I was three." A puzzled expression crossed Len's face. "That's funny! The nipper in the dream was three."

"Your father is still alive within you, although he's hidden by a cloak. At all cost, you must find him, and then you'll be able to respond to Jenny whole-heartedly."

"But in the dream I wasn't marrying Jenny!"

"No, but before you even think of marrying her, there must be a union within yourself."

He shook his head in bewilderment.

"Len," she said, "everybody on this earth, regardless of their sex, has within them the perfect man and the perfect woman. Before a person can be really whole, these two must be wedded in a mystical bond. No man can visualise the perfect woman—just as no woman can visualise the perfect man—and so when he dreams of her he usually gives her the form of someone he knows. You were paying me a great compliment when in your dreams you saw me as part of yourself."

"Why didn't I dream of Jenny? I think she's perfect too!"

"She isn't perfect, but that's no reason why you shouldn't love her with all your heart. If more marriages took into consideration people's faults, there wouldn't be much divorce!"

"Then has she got to go through this . . . this sort of internal marriage?"

"Perhaps eventually. But she's more whole than you are because she has had a less disturbed upbringing."

"I reckon what you've said, miss, amounts to this: one can't really love another person until one has first learnt to understand oneself."

"Broadly speaking, that is the truth, Len," she answered.

He nodded slowly. "I won't ever forget what you've said, miss. Thank you."

At this moment, the door opened and Sergeant Lane walked into the shop. Len did not know who he was, for he had never met him.

"Good afternoon," said Sergeant Lane.

"Good afternoon, sir," replied Len.

"Mind if I have a look round?"

"No. Is there anything I can show you?"

"I'm looking for a present to give someone," was the casual rejoinder. "But don't worry I'd just like to poke round on my own." He turned away to a table covered with china ornaments.

The Angel rose from her chair.

"I must fly!" she said. "I have an appointment in the West End."

"But you haven't had your tea!" protested Len. "The kettle will be boiling now. I'll have a cup for you in a half-a-jiffy."

"It's very kind of you, but really I mustn't stay much longer."

"I'll be back in a moment, miss," Len turned to the door behind him, then he remembered the man who had just come in. There would be no harm in offering him a cup of tea also; it might help to promote a sale.

"I've got a kettle on the boil, sir," he said over his shoulder. "Would you like a cup?"

Sergeant Lane looked up from the ornament he was examining.

"Oh, thanks very much."

Len went along to the office. When he returned a few minutes later with three cups of tea on a tray, he found the detective in conversation with the Angel.

"I've always thought the harp was a beautiful instrument," Sergeant Lane was saying, "but I should imagine it must be a hard one to learn."

"It's one of the most neglected instruments in the world today," she answered. "It is quite hard to master, but I can assure you it's tremendously rewarding."

"Yes, I can imagine. I suppose you've been playing it for a long time?"

"A very long time," she admitted.

Len handed her a cup of tea.

"Tar," said Sergeant Lane, taking his cup.

The Angel said to him, "As you seem to be so interested in the harp, why don't you start learning to play it yourself?"

"I might do at that!" he exclaimed. "Do you think one could learn it by post?"

"I suppose it would be possible," she answered. "But would you like me to come along and give you a lesson sometime?"

"That's very kind of you, miss! I'd certainly be most grateful."

"My movements are a little uncertain at the moment—you see I'm on holiday—but if you'll give me your name and address, I'll try to find the time to visit you one evening."

"My name's Lane, and my address is thirty-two Recreation Road."

Len gave a start of surprise and stared at Jenny's father with new interest.

"What a delightful address!" commented the Angel. "I'll easily remember that."

"But I'll have to get a harp first."

Len said, "You can sometimes find one quite cheaply that only needs a bit of repair. Mind you, the one belonging to this—er—young lady is very valuable."

"I must keep an eye open for one," said Sergeant Lane.

Len looked at the Angel. "Miss, before you go, do you think you could play us something?"

"Yes, I shall be delighted to." She put down her cup and turned to the harp. Her hands caressed the strings and once again the shop was filled with that exquisite, haunting little tune which Len had heard her play once before.

Sergeant Lane was visibly affected. He gazed at the Angel with wonder in his eyes.

"My word, you know how to play, miss!" he exclaimed wistfully when the final chords died into silence. "I haven't heard that tune before," he said.

"What's it called?"

"The Song of Heaven," she answered.

At this moment the telephone rang in the office.

"Excuse me," said Len. "I'd better answer that."

With an effort, Sergeant Lane recalled the fact that he was here on official business, and that the call might be for him. Before leaving the station he had given the switchboard operator instructions to ring him at Mr. Webman's shop if by any chance

a report came through from Scotland Yard regarding the Angel, whose description he had asked the Rogues Gallery to check.

"That may be for me," he said, following Len out of the shop.

Len picked up the telephone in the office. Sergeant Lane stood just behind him.

A voice said, "Is a gentleman in a brown suit in the shop at the moment?"

"Yes," answered Len. "He's here with me."

"Can I have a word with him, please?"

"Certainly." He handed the instrument to the detective.

Sergeant Lane was only on the phone for about twenty seconds. The station operator told him that a completely negative report had been received from the Yard's Identification Department. All the beautiful Rogues could be accounted for.

"Thank you," was all he said, replacing the receiver.

They left the room. Sergeant Lane was the first to enter the shop and as he opened the door he gave a whistle of astonishment.

Both the Angel and her harp had vanished.

Followed by Len he ran across to the street door and flung it open. There was no sign of a car in sight. The street was empty and it was now raining hard.

The two men gazed at each other, completely baffled.

"How long would you say we were out of that room for?" the detective asked.

"Not more than half a minute," answered Len.

"And yet in that time she got the harp out of the shop and into a car and cleared off?"

"How can we know that?" asked Len.

"Well, that's the only explanation!" exclaimed Sergeant Lane in an exasperated tone. "Do you imagine she vanished into thin air, harp and all?"

"Yes," said Len flatly.

"Strut! You must be as crazy as a kite!" he exclaimed in a tone of exasperated anger which was really directed at himself. "It's possible, I tell you! There's nothing queer about it. The car drew up while we were listening to the harp and, of course, we didn't notice it. There must have been at least a couple of men in the car, and as soon as we were out of the room they slipped in and took the harp and drove off with the Angel—he checked himself, 'with the girl. It's as simple as that!'"

"But why should she want to rush off without even finishing her tea?" Len asked mildly.

"Check your till! See if she's pinched anything! Is there anything of high value in the shop? By heaven, if she's pinched anything I'll have every police car in the area alerted within the next five minutes. Come on, get a move on, son!"

In silence, Len did as he was told. Nothing had gone.

Sergeant Lane pulled out a cigarette-case and held it out to him.

"Thanks," said Len taking a cigarette.

"We both need this," said Sergeant Lane.

They were about for a moment, then with a sigh the detective pulled a notebook from his pocket.

"I want you to tell me all you know about this young woman."

Len described the Angel's first appearance in the shop, the dance, and her return to collect her harp. He saw no reason to outline her theories about the interpretation of dreams. Sergeant Lane made a lot of notes but felt he was wasting his time in doing so. He reckoned he could detect lies as soon as they were uttered, and he

was convinced that Len was only telling the truth.

"No one seems to have seen this girl come or go," he muttered, pocketing his notebook. "I don't know what to think. I've never known a case like it."

"But now she's repaid the loan and taken away her harp, isn't the case closed?" asked Len.

"It must still stand on the files. Your boss may be right; possibly she was scouting-out the lay of the land for a robbery." After a momentary hesitation, he added, "Although I admit it doesn't seem a very likely explanation to me. Still, there must be some motive behind that beautifully organised getaway just now. Perhaps she didn't want to be questioned."

"She said she had an appointment in the West End," Len reminded him. "Maybe when we'd left the room she realised the time was much later than she thought so she simply spread her wings and flew off."

"If I put that down as a possible explanation in my official report I'd be suspended from duty at once and sent into a mental ward for observation." Sergeant Lane glanced at his watch. "Well, I'd better be getting back to the Station. Oh, by the way, I told Jenny I might be seeing you today and she asked me to give you a message."

Len's heart sank. In his experience messages from girls always meant puttings-off. Doubtless Jenny had fallen a sudden victim to flu, or she had forgotten a promise to baby-sit on Saturday afternoon, or her grandmother had died.

"Yes," he said dully.

"She wants to know if you've got anything mapped out on Sunday. If not, would you like to have Sunday dinner with us, then go on the River?"

Len's face lit up. "I'll say I would!"

"Thanks, Sergeant Lane!"

"Okay, son. Cheerio!"

ON Saturday evening when Mr. Webman met Parker at the Red Lion, they sat at a vacant table in a corner of the saloon bar. Earlier on, Ned had rung up his friend to say that he hoped to join them later; he had taken Sully off to Epping Forest for the day.

Mr. Webman saw no reason why he should not tell Parker about the Angel's last visit to the shop. To begin with, Parker's attitude towards the strange story of her disappearance was frankly incredulous. He regarded Mr. Webman slyly.

"Have you gone behind my back, old man, and sold that harp to someone else?"

"No, I certainly have not!" exclaimed Mr. Webman indignantly. He shrugged his shoulders. "I admit I was going to get an expert valuation of it, but of course I was too late—the girl took it away before the expert came."

Parker patted his shoulder. "Okay, old man, okay! No need to get shirty. I believe you. If you ask me, that lad of yours was exaggerating when he said that he and the detective were out of the room for only a few seconds. They may have been in the office for a few minutes, and probably the girl got tired of waiting for them to come back."

"Um, I suppose so," Mr. Webman's tone was doubtful because he could no longer believe that the Angel had been spying for Hewson; Len's request, which had so closely followed her remarks on the subject of lectures, plus the facts of her sudden disappearance had gradually forced him to abandon his cynical theories to which he had clung with such tenacity.

"She was dressed all in white too," he continued.

Parker chuckled. "Next you'll be telling me she was an angel!"

Mr. Webman looked rather uncomfortable. "I don't know that there's so much to laugh about. It sounds crazy, I agree, but you haven't seen and heard what some of us have." He paused, and then spoke very softly and slowly. "If angels do exist, I can imagine that perhaps sometimes they get a little tired of all the goodness in heaven and feel like having a holiday on earth where they can get into a bit of healthy mischief."

Parker gave a great guffaw. "Oh, Christmas, that's a good one! An angel pawning her harp! Oh, my sainted aunt!" He dug Mr. Webman in the ribs. "If I were you, I'd go and see a doctor—you're going off your rocker, old man!"

Mr. Webman shifted uneasily. "Laugh if you like, but it's something I'll always remember."

For a few moments, Parker shook with merriment. At last he managed to control himself and again patted Mr. Webman's shoulder.

"All right, don't take offence, old man. It was the idea tickled me." He took a deep draught from his glass, then suddenly his expression changed. His face became serious and a startled look came into his eyes. "I've just thought of something," he said.

"What?" asked Mr. Webman huffily. "You remember I had a good look at that harp?"

"Yes."

"Well, as you know, the ordinary harp isn't worth a lot these days."

"I know that."

"But this one was a Canaro del Mander harp."

"That doesn't mean anything to me."

"Del Mander was the greatest maker of harps who has ever lived."

"You mean like Stradivarius with violins?"

"That's right. But now there are only three Del Mander harps known to exist in the entire world."

"One moment, my friend," said Mr. Webman. "That harp had no maker's name on it."

"Neither have some of the finest violins," Parker replied promptly.

"Anyway, what's interesting is this: There's a legend that Del Mander was the only mortal who has made harps for the angels."

He paused for a moment. "Strange, eh?"

"Very strange," Mr. Webman answered thoughtfully.

Parker gave a forced laugh and pulled out his cigarette-case.

"Of course we're both crackers talking like this. Have a cig?"

"Then what was that harp really worth?" Mr. Webman asked quietly.

Parker laughed. "Ah-hai! That'd be telling!"

"I can't see any point in keeping its value secret now."

"Very well," said Parker after a momentary hesitation. "I would say it would fetch five hundred quid at least. Probably a great deal more."

"To think what I have missed!" breathed Mr. Webman in a stricken tone.

"Think what we've both missed."

There was a short silence, then suddenly Mr. Webman gave a start and turned on Parker in shocked anger.

"Why you — you bloodsucker! You were only going to give me sixty-seven pounds ten for it!"

Parker smiled. "Perhaps I might have given you a bit more for it in the end. But business is business, isn't it, old man? If you'd have been in my position, wouldn't you have kept your mouth shut?"

"Maybe I would," Mr. Webman agreed reluctantly.

"There you are. By the by, you

asked me to let you know if I came across a musical-box at any time."

"Ugh? . . . Yes, I believe I did." Mr. Webman was still sunk in gloom. "Yesterday I saw one in a shop rather like yours and bought it just for a lark. But the darn thing doesn't work. I don't know if it'd be of any interest to you."

"I'd like to see it," said Mr. Webman in a rather more interested tone.

Parker put his hand in his pocket and drew out a small box about the size of a match-box and handed it to Mr. Webman. It was inlaid with mother-of-pearl and gold filigree work. It looked almost new.

"Thank you," said Mr. Webman. "At a first glance, I would say it was cheap twentieth-century work. A French maybe. Before the First World War they put these things in high-class crackers."

"It's meant to start playing when you lift the lid, but it doesn't," said Parker.

Mr. Webman examined the box with apparent indifference. "Pity it doesn't work," he said. "It's only a Christmas novelty, of course, but it might give out quite a pretty jingle."

"From the way you were talking the other day I'd have thought the fact that it doesn't work would be a point in its favor."

"Ah, but it's hardly worth repairing a thing like this, my friend." Mr. Webman put the box down on the table.

"Want to make me an offer?"

"Oh, I don't know. I've got several like it. But still, it's quite a pretty box. I'll give you a pound for it."

"I wasn't born yesterday, old man," grinned Parker.

Mr. Webman retorted with asperity. "My final offer, take it or leave it, is one pound fifteen."

"Two pounds ten."

"One pound nineteen!"

"Two pounds seven!"

"Three!"

"Four!"

Mr. Webman shook his head. "No, my friend, it's not worth it."

"Two pounds three and I'll buy you a drink."

"Done!" cried Mr. Webman, snatching up the box.

"Same again, old man?"

Mr. Webman gave him a shy smile. "No, I think I've had enough beer. If you don't mind I'll have a double whisky."

Parker smiled. "Struth, you're a slippery customer, old man!"

As soon as Parker had crossed to the bar, Mr. Webman took a jeweller's glass out of his pocket, screwed it into his eye and began to make a closer examination of the box. So absorbed was he in his task that he did not notice Ned come up to the table.

"Good evening, Josh," said Ned.

"Hallo, Ned," said Mr. Webman without looking out.

"Well, now, what have you there?"

For a few moments, Mr. Webman continued to fiddle with the box, utterly absorbed.

"Oh! . . . Oh, I'm sorry, Ned. It's a musical-box."

"I might have guessed! Is it a good one?"

Mr. Webman answered him in a hushed, excited tone. "It is a very, very rare example of the work of Van Hartow! He made boxes exclusively for the dukes of Burgundy in the Netherlands. His work has never been surpassed."

Ned gave a low whistle.

"Sh-h-h," Mr. Webman held a finger to his lips, then jerked it in the direction of Parker. "That mug has just sold it to me for a song. When he comes

back from the bar, we won't discuss it."

"Let's have a tune," suggested Ned. "It's broken, but I'll soon have it running. Then, my friend, you will hear some of the most beautiful sounds that have ever been made by a musical instrument."

"Well, if you're going to have a harp, I'm going to have a washing-machine," said Mrs. Lane when, on Sunday night, her husband told her that he had decided to make inquiries about a postal course in harp-playing. They were alone in the sitting-room. After returning from the River, Jenny had gone to the pictures with Len, and the children were in bed.

"Bit of a difference in price," remarked Sergeant Lane, looking round from his writing-desk.

She put down her magazine with an exasperated sigh.

"Dick, why do you have to pick on a harp of all instruments?"

He smiled. "Your trouble, Mary, is that you're not musical. But I believe if you could hear that angel play her harp you'd be converted."

"Angel?—I thought you described that girl in your report as being a 'suspicious character'?"

"I did." He got up from his chair and crossing to the mantelpiece began filling his pipe. "That's the worst of being a policeman. When you're on duty, you can't class facts which you don't pretend to understand as being 'astounding' or 'inexplicable' or 'miraculous'."

However, you have to give them some kind of a tag, so you call them 'suspicious.'"

"It's a good thing there are some coppers with their feet firmly planted on the ground!"

"That's where I try to keep mine, but it's a fat lot of good when an angel turns up."

"You missed your vocation. You should have been a virtuoso living in a world of music and imagination!"

"All right, all right!" he said in a bellicose tone. "Perhaps that's why I'm going to get a harp and I'm going to learn to play it. Blow me down, I spend most of my working hours investigating sordid crimes, so why on earth shouldn't I ponder to my higher nature in the evenings?"

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"It's a good thing there are some coppers with their feet firmly planted on the ground!"

"That's where I try to keep mine, but it's a fat lot of good when an angel turns up."

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with his mother. He felt that nothing could be more wonderful than that the two women in his life should form a firm and lasting friendship. Then he could love them both equally as much.

Soon he would ask Jenny to marry him, and he felt pretty sure what her answer would be. When they were married, she would come to live in his home and he would be in paradise. She would make things much easier for his mother, for she would take on the house-work and cooking and there would be no more rows in the house because his bride would bring with her a new spirit of cheerfulness and vitality. In time, his home would become like the Lane's, which he envied tremendously for its untidy, happy-go-lucky atmosphere.

"Jenny, you're very quiet this evening," he remarked.

"Am I?" she asked brightly. "I'm sure I don't know why that should be."

"Tired?"

"A wee bit perhaps. It's been so hot today."

"You'll feel better after a nice cuppa and something to eat."

"I'd like some tea, but I'm not in the least hungry. I do hope your mum hasn't put herself out at all."

"Oh, she'll enjoy it. I dare say she may have cooked up some kind of a treat."

"You're very fond of her, aren't you, Len?" said Jenny with an effort.

"Yes," he answered. "You see, I've never had a father you could speak of."

"Why can't you speak of him?" she asked sharply.

"Well, Jenny, you've got to know sooner or later. He was a drunken loafer, no good to anyone. Anyway, I can't remember him."

"Then how do you know he was that bad?"

"Because Mum says so."

"And you take her word for it?"

"Of course I do!"

They walked on in silence. Len thought about his dream and the advice which the Angel had given him. He was still a little mystified by what she had said, but ever since Thursday he had been feeling vaguely uncomfortable. He supposed that at one time and another he must have behaved in a very inconsiderate way to his mother and that if he could gain a greater and more specific knowledge of his father's faults and vices, he would be able to watch out for them in himself and consciously correct them.

After all, his mother had said to him many times, "You're fatted with the same brush as your father." Len was at least a trifle. Sometimes he admitted to himself that he was soft, weak-minded and full of inferior feelings; it was during these periods of honest self-criticism that he would read a book on how to improve oneself.

He was so occupied with his thoughts that he almost passed his own house.

"Crums, here we are!" he said abruptly to Jenny. "And there's Mum looking through the window."

Jenny caught a fleeting glimpse of a shadowy head and shoulders behind lace-curtains. As soon as she entered Len's home she took an instant dislike to it. There was something in the atmosphere which was oppressive and forbidding.

Len's suggestion of coming here this evening.

He put a hand on her shoulder and guided her into the sitting-room, which smelt of brass polish, hot linoleum and arum lilies. The sun had been shining into the room all afternoon, but the windows were tight shut.

Mr. Lane, a stout, middle-aged man, stood just beside the doorway.

MRS. LANE looked

up at him and smiled slowly. "Remember washing-machines cost an awful lot of money."

For several moments he puffed hard at his pipe. Then he exclaimed, "You win, Mary! I'll take the advanced course in piano-playing instead."

On Sundays, the programme at the Palace ended rather earlier than on weekdays. The time was only half-past nine when Len and Jenny came out into the High Street. The evening was fine and very warm; Jenny was hoping that Len might suggest going for a walk in the Park, but he had other ideas.

"Jenny," he said, slipping his arm through hers, "would you like to come back home and meet Mum?"

He felt her stiffen but she answered at once, "Okay, Len."

"I said I might be bringing you in for a cup of tea about now. She was quite excited at the idea."

They started walking in the direction of his home. Their afternoon on a river-steamer had been a happy one, but now a barrier seemed to have sprung up between them. Jenny was wishing that Len was an orphan, for she had not liked what Len had told her about Mrs. Burrows. Len was full of hope that she would get on famously

"Hallo, Mum, this is Jenny," said Len cheerfully.

Mrs. Burrows shook hands with Jenny, her drawn features relaxing into a suspicion of a smile.

"Pleased to meet you," she said. "I'm glad to meet you, Mrs. Burrows," replied Jenny, smiling very sweetly.

"I expect you're hungry."

"Well, not—" Jenny broke off as she suddenly noticed the tea table in a corner of the room; it was loaded with plates of thickly-cut sandwiches, cakes and fruit. "Well, I've got a bit of an appetite," she said with an embarrassed laugh.

"Len said you'd be very hungry."

"Mum, I didn't!" protested her son. "All I said was I might be bringing her back for a cuppa."

"Mrs. Trap is getting the tea now. She dropped in with those lovely lilies just after six and said she must stop and help me."

Before Len could comment on this misfortune, Mrs. Burrows turned to Jenny and said, "I'll take you upstairs for a wash."

"Oh, I don't think I'll bother, thanks all the same," replied Jenny, edging closer to Len. Somehow the fact that Mrs. Trap had provided the lilies, which stood in a vase on the window-sill, was for her the final touch of horror. Len had told her all about Mrs. Trap, and now she pictured the lilies reposing on a shrouded bosom and then being removed when the corpse was lifted into its coffin.

"I'll go and see how Mrs. Trap is getting on," said Len's mother.

When she had left the room, Len remarked, "It's a nice room, isn't it, Jenny?"

"Um, ever so cheery," she answered mechanically.

"I'm sorry about Mrs. Trap," he said in a low, apologetic voice. "If I'd known she was going to be here I'd never have suggested coming."

"Oh, I expect we'll get on smashingly!" said Jenny with unjustified optimism.

A few minutes later, Mrs. Trap swept into the room with the grim dignity of a heavy tank going into action; her eyes, like black bullets, raked Jenny from head to toes.

"I hear you're not hungry?" she asked sharply.

"I'm not terribly," answered Jenny.

"It's a pity we didn't know!" She turned on Len, "I came in at six and found your poor mother beat to the wide. Yes, I mean it! She'd been slaving away at housework all day while you were out, and then she was expected to get a late meal for you and your girl. My word, you treat your mother in a shocking way, Len! However, we'll set that matter aside until later—I can see I've got to give you a real talking-to, else your mother is going to be in her coffin before long. Now I hope you can do justice to all this good food!"

Mrs. Burrows, who had come into the room behind her friend, smiled in a martyred way at Jenny and said, "You mustn't pay too much attention to what Mrs. Trap says. It's just her fun. Really, it's been no trouble to cut a few sandwiches and fortunately I had some cakes in the house. Let's sit down and enjoy ourselves."

As can be imagined, Len and Jenny found no enjoyment whatsoever during the next fifteen minutes. It would be difficult to say which of the two was most unhappy.

Jenny hardly uttered a word, for the first sandwich she ate made her feel downright sick; it was only a paste sandwich but she was certain that the paste was far from fresh and she could not help noticing that neither Mrs. Burrows nor Mrs. Trap sampled one.

The cakes were rather less nauseating, but they were as hard and heavy as bricks. Having eaten two, she felt that she could face no more.

Len could sympathise to a certain extent with her sullen mood, for he too was dubious about the sandwiches, but on the other hand he felt that she might make some contribution to the conversation.

If he had been more observant and less self-centred, he would have noticed that she was growing steadily paler, in which case he might have made some excuse for bringing the party to a speedy end. He could easily have said, "Come on, Jenny, I'll be in trouble with your dad if I don't get you home by ten-fifteen," and she would have jumped at the cue.

Mrs. Trap did most of the talking, discussing with grim relish the falling health of various local residents on whose "remains" and "cadavers" she doubtless hoped to exercise her professional skill.

"No more!" she exclaimed when Jenny refused a third cake. "Mum has got a small appetite! You'll have to eat up better when you come to live here! Mrs. Burrows doesn't stand for anyone dieting in her home; she's a real Lady Bountiful and it hurts her dreadfully to see any food left on the table."

"But I haven't the slightest intention of coming to live here!" exclaimed Jenny in a tone of deepest dismay. "I'm sure I don't know what you're talking about."

"Neither do I!" put in Len, who had gone very red.

"Oh, Len, you did mention—" began Mrs. Burrows.

"I didn't, Mum! I didn't say anything of the kind!" he shouted.

"Well, I'm afraid I've told the neighbors," she said weakly.

He jumped to his feet.

"Sit down!" thundered Mrs. Trap. "We're not putting up with any of your tantrums on a Sunday evening, my lad. Your poor mum doesn't make up stories and she's told all of us you said you're going to bring this girl to live here after you're married."

Jenny gave a little gasp and stared angrily at Len, who was trembling with mingled fear and rage; his happy picture of the future had been suddenly shattered; he felt he must be in the middle of some appalling nightmare.

"Mrs. Trap," he said in a hoarse, breathless voice, "I'm fed up to the back teeth with your interference; I'm fed up with your lousy talk of stifles and coffins; I wish you'd kick the bucket yourself, you'd never come inside this house again!"

Mrs. Burrows, who had risen slowly from her chair, screamed at him, "Go to your room, Len!"

Now Jenny was on her feet.

"I'm the one who's going," she said quickly. "Good night, all, and thanks for the tea." She walked out of the room, leaving behind her a brief silence which was punctuated by the slamming of the front door.

Mrs. Trap was the first to speak. "Well, my lad, you'd better do as your mother says."

Her words stirred Len to action. With a little cry he rushed to the door. A moment later, he was pounding down the street calling out, "Jenny! Jenny! Wait a moment!"

"I think I'm going to bed," said Mrs. Lane with a yawn.

"I'll be up in a few minutes," murmured her husband, who had returned to his writing-desk.

"I wonder what Jenny's doing?—the pictures would have ended long ago."

"Come for a walk probably."

"What d'you make of this new boy she's going around with?"

"Len? He's not too bad. I feel rather sorry for him. I don't think he realises he's one of many."

"I don't think he is one of many."

Sergeant Lane looked round in surprise. "Are you serious, Mary?"

"Yes, said so is Jenny."

He rubbed his chin. "Hm! We've always said we wouldn't interfere when Jenny began courting. But you must make allowances for a proud father. I doubt if I'd think any man good enough for that kid."

"Perhaps there's more in him than meets the eye."

"There must be, I suppose. After all, our Jenny has got her head screwed on the right way. What do you think about him?"

Mrs. Lane hesitated. "I really wouldn't like to say until I've met him a few more times. I think there's something nice about him, but I can't put my finger on what it is. And yet he strikes me as being a bit spineless."

"Um, I know what you mean! I noticed this afternoon that he seemed to be kind of hanging on to Jenny—almost as though he were a small boy and she was his mother."

They heard the click of the front door being opened and Jenny's footsteps in the passage. Much to their surprise, she did not come into the sitting-room but started to go upstairs.

"That's funny!" said Mrs. Lane. She rose quickly and opened the door. "Jenny," she called, "aren't you coming in to say good night?"

"Oh, sorry," replied her daughter from half-way up the stairs.

When she came into the room, both her parents could see that something was wrong. She was still very pale and she looked dead tired.

"Hallo, Jen, what's up?" asked Sergeant Lane.

"Nothing," she answered dully.

"Oh, come off it!"

"I ate a bad sandwich."

Mrs. Lane asked, "Did Len eat one too?"

"I dunno," she said distantly. "Yes, I expect he did. I couldn't care less."

"D'you mean you've had a row with him?" asked her father.

"Oh, let her alone, Dick!" exclaimed Mrs. Lane. "Can't you see she's all in?" Then to Jenny: "You go on upstairs, dear, and I'll bring you a nice drink."

"Thanks, Mums." She went across to her father and pecked him on the cheek. "Good night, Dad."

"Good night, honey." As she turned away, he said, "Remember there's a lot of truth in the old saying, 'There's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it.'"

She swung round, her eyes as bright as stars. "You needn't worry. I shan't be such a mutt as to go out with a fish again. In future, my dates will be with men!"

On Sunday night, four men dreamt of the Angel.

Mr. Weisman, who had been fiddling about with his Hartog box until one in the morning but had not succeeded in coaxing a single note out of it, was compensated by a delightfully vivid dream in which he was sitting at his work-table when the Angel suddenly materialised beside him. He was not taken aback; it seemed quite natural that she should be there.

"Hallo, my dear," he said, looking up, "and what can I do for you this evening?"

"I've come to thank you for trusting me," she said simply.

"There's no need for you to do that," he said.

"And to reward you," she added. "You can make one wish and it will be granted."

He removed his glasses and smiled.

up at her. "That's very good of you, my dear, but I don't know what to wish for."

"Then you must already be a happy man. But wouldn't you like a lot of money, or a lovely holiday on a luxury cruiser-liner, or a thousand bottles of Irish whisky?"

He shook his head slowly. "No, I don't want any of those things—they'd unsettle me."

"But you must have one deep longing which needs to be satisfied!"

"Yes," he said thoughtfully. "I believe I have one wish, but unfortunately you could not grant it."

"Tell me what it is."

"I have no children. I have no one to whom I can leave my musical-boxes when I die, knowing that they will be cared for and appreciated and that the great craft of the men who made them will be fostered. I would like fifty children who are all interested in musical-boxes."

"You shall have them," she said and faded away . . .

Ned also dreamt of the Angel. Although in his waking hours he was a far more imaginative person than Mr. Webman, his dream was very prosaic in content.

He was sitting in a London-Dublin air-liner, and the air-hostess was the Angel, dressed all in green with a miniature harp embroidered in gold thread on her breast pocket.

Bending over him, she said, "Well now, Mr. Sullivan, what's this I've been ather hearin' about you wanting a wife?"

"Sure, it's the simple truth," he answered. "I must have grandchildren to tell me stories to, especially the story about you."

"Now have you tried the Red Lion?"

"And why should I do that, woman? It's a wife I'm ather wantin', not a drink."

"And it's both you'll be findin' there," she retorted. "Now have you thought of Sally?"

"Begor, I haven't, woman, and that's a fact!"

"Sure, you're a foolish man, Mr. Sullivan, for Sally's as fine a girl as you'd find in Galway and it's a good wife she'd be makin' you."

Sergeant Lane's dream was a disconcerting one. It was set in the Police Station, where he was questioning the Angel, who had been arrested on suspicion of stealing a washing-machine.

She looked like a beautiful wanton with a lock of golden hair falling over her white face, and her lips a gash of scarlet. There was an expression of smouldering defiance in her eyes. Her hands were thrust deep into the pockets of a black silk house-coat.

Sergeant Lane looked up at her from his desk. "I have to caution you that anything further you say will be taken down and may be used as evidence against you."

"The trouble with you is that you're all caution," she answered tartly. "What are you getting at?" he snapped.

"You're scared of feeling deeply. You make a joke of your music. Actually, it's of extreme importance to you as a counterbalance to your work as a Policeman."

He felt a strong antagonism towards his prisoner, who seemed by her attitude to hold an inexplicable authority over him.

He told her angrily, "You're a danger to the community, and I hope you go to prison as you deserve."

"You'll be disappointed," she answered coolly.

He stared at her in silence, filled with a sudden longing to take her in his arms and at the same time destroy her.

"Well?" she said.

All at once he felt his strength drain out of him.

"Go on, clear out!" he ordered gruffly.

Smiling at him, she shook her head. "I've come to stay here now . . . for ever!"

Perhaps of the four men who dreamt of the Angel that night, Len had the most extraordinary dream, for in it he was a small, sick fish.

It was a pity he did not feel well, for he found himself in a warm, tropical lagoon which was full of sunlit color and beautiful plants which rose like delicate trellis-work from the sandy ocean bed.

He thought how nice it would be to swim with the other fish, which were all very lovely; there were long, green Swordfish with ruby eyes, Siamese Fighting Fish, whose royal-blue scales were shot through with crimson, phosphorescent Tetra Glow Lights and dazzling schools of Neons. But he just did not feel up to moving about much, and so he lurked in the mouth of a cavern, watching the fish swim by and wishing for better health.

And then the most queenly fish he had ever seen swam up to him. It was a huge Angel Fish whose gleaming silver body seemed to reflect the colors of all the other fish.

"Hallo, Len," said the Angel gently. "Hallo, miss," he wagged his dorsal fin in an attempt to show his pleasure at seeing her.

"What are we going to do about you?" she asked.

"I'm sure I don't know, miss," he answered miserably. "I feel lousy."

"I tell you what, I'll get some of those Fighting Fish to come and attack you—that may help."

ON Monday evening, Mr. Webman was still at work on the Hartog box. Twice he had taken it to pieces and put it together again, but it still would not function.

For the first time in many years he was completely baffled. Admittedly, this box was the most complicated one he had ever handled, but he felt by now that he should have discovered what was wrong with it. The mechanism was not very dirty and none of the parts seemed to be damaged. The difficulty with Hartog was that unlike many of the great masters of Muboxdom he had no weaknesses in his constructional ability and choice of materials.

Hartog was the supreme master of his craft, a musical and mechanical genius. The functioning of his boxes depended on the most delicate alignment of parts; a surface which was one-thousandth of an inch out of alignment could prevent one of his boxes from sounding a single note. Of course, Mr. Webman was well aware of this fact, but he hated to admit even to himself that there could be any error in his meticulous work of cleaning and reconstruction.

Shortly after seven o'clock, Ned rang up.

"Hallo, Josh, are you coming round to the Red Lion this evening?"

"Ned, my friend, I'm afraid I can't. Len is bringing along an electrician who wants to talk to me about a microphone for the lecture I'm giving at their Club on Friday."

"What do you want a microphone for?"

"It will make some of my very old chiming-watches audible all over the hall—their music is very faint, you see."

"Well, now, Josh, I have some important news for you. Can I come round and see you at once?"

"Why, certainly, Ned! I don't suppose the boys will stay long."

A quarter of an hour later, Ned was sitting on the other side of the table and between them was a dumpy, brown bottle.

"Your very good health, Josh," said Ned, raising his glass.

They drank deeply and Ned beamed with contentment.

"Well now, Josh, you'll never guess what I have to tell you. It's about Sally."

Mr. Webman looked a little blank.

"In the Red Lion," prompted Ned.

"Oh, yes, you mean the little red-head behind the bar."

"Her hair's not red!" exclaimed Ned indignantly. "Sure, it's as golden as the corn in the Vale of Tipperary."

Mr. Webman caught on. "She's certainly a most attractive young person," he said hurriedly. "In fact, Ned, I think she is probably one of the nicest girls in the neighborhood. With her looks go a very sweet temper and—a charming voice."

His friend was delighted. "Josh, I always thought you were blind when it came to a pretty girl, but begor, I'm mistaken. Well now, I won't be keeping you in suspense any longer." He paused and then announced dramatically, "Sally and I are going to be married!"

Mr. Webman gripped his hand across the table.

"Congratulations! Many, many congratulations! My friend, this news makes me so happy. I'm certain she'll be a splendid wife and you'll make her a fine husband."

"And we're going to have a large family, Josh—a family worthy of Galway: ten boys and ten girls."

"And they'll all learn to tell stories."

"Yes, and so will their children."

"And the story of the Angel will become a legend!"

Mr. Webman and Ned roared with happy laughter and then drank solemn toasts to Sally and the Angel. When they had replenished their glasses, Ned told his friend about the dream-visit of "Her Blissfulness" and how straightway that morning he had visited Sally's home and proposed to her.

It appeared that Sally had cherished a secret passion for the little Irishman for a long while and had wept with joy when he disclosed the reason for his visit. They were to be married in about a month's time and he had decided to give a party at the Red Lion on the eve of the wedding. They were going to fly to Ireland for a holiday in Galway.

At eight o'clock, Len and his electrician friend turned up. The electrician, who was a pleasant lad, did not stay long. After he had listened to the music of some of the boxes, which were to be played during the course of the lecture, he said he knew exactly what type of microphone would be needed and that he could adjust the amplifiers in the hall so that there would be a minimum of distortion. Mr. Webman offered him a drink, but he politely refused it, saying he had to get back home.

Len accepted a drink, hoping that it might cheer him up. In point of fact, it had such a powerful effect on him that he stayed on after his friend had left, helping to celebrate Ned's engagement. An hour later, he was still there. The table was now piled with musical-boxes. Mr. Webman and Ned were singing lustily and the whisky bottle was empty.

His employer asked him if he would go down to the cellar, which was beneath the office and fetch up another bottle. There was no electric light in the cellar but Mr. Webman found him

a torch. He left the room rather unsteadily and made his way down the stone steps at the end of the passage.

It was while he was out of the room that both Mr. Webman and Ned heard a scuffling sound in the shop. Their eyes met and they nodded slowly.

"It's Her Blissfulness returned to wish me good luck!" declared Ned.

"I wouldn't be in the least surprised," said Mr. Webman. "We'd better go and welcome her."

They had just risen from their chairs when the door was pushed open. They turned quickly, expecting to see the beautiful figure of the Angel float into the room. Instead they were confronted by a masked youth who pointed a Mauser pistol at them.

"Stick your hands up and keep 'em that way!" The gunman spoke in a pseudo-American drawl.

"Why, yer dirty bound!" shouted Ned. "I'll—" Without finishing his sentence, he lunged forward, regardless of the long-barrelled automatic.

The gunman did not shoot him. Instead, he jerked out his left fist, which was covered by a steel knuckle-duster. Its impact on Ned's jaw sounded like an ear being broken. With a faint moan, the little man slowly buckled at the knees and fell to the floor. His assailant kicked him twice in the face for good measure.

Mr. Webman stared down in horror at his friend. Blood was pouring from Ned's nose and mouth; it seemed likely that within a few minutes he would be dead from loss of blood, if his neck had not already been broken by the cruel fist-blow.

"Okay, take it easy!" said the gunman. "I'm not gonna do for you unless you start gettin' fresh too."

"What do you want?" asked Mr. Webman in a hoarse whisper.

"What d'you think I want, old sport? I want your dough! Hand over and there'll be no trouble. But if there's any larking-about, I'll blow your brains out."

"You must attend to my friend first. Unless that bleeding is stopped, he'll die."

"I'm attending to no one, you crazy old Jew! But the sooner you hand over the dough, the quicker I'll be out of here and you'll be able to call an ambulance." He looked round the room and spotted the safe. "Ah! That's what I want. Hand over the key."

Mr. Webman lost no time in obeying the command. All that mattered for the moment was Ned's life.

"Thanks!" said the gunman, taking the key. Then once again he jerked back his fist and drove it into Mr. Webman's face.

As he stood gazing down at the two bodies, for a moment he experienced a certain misgiving, then pulling himself together he turned to the safe.

Len tiptoed up to the top of the cellar stairs, his right hand clutching a long-necked bottle of whisky. When he had first heard the gunman's voice in the room above, the pleasant glow of liquor inside him had been swamped by a cringing terror which stopped his breath. Quivering from head to foot, he had cowered in a corner, intending to stay there until all was safe. Then as he had crouched in the darkness, having heard the thud of Ned's body hitting the floor and the gunman's order to Mr. Webman, a tiny spark of manhood had penetrated the fear which enveloped his heart.

The spark had leapt into a flame and then into a roaring fire of blind fury which drove him to the foot of the stairs. There he had paused for a second, brought to a halt by the thud of the second body. Once again, panic had almost gained the upper hand, but anger was still present, and out of

these two emotions was born a sense of clear-sighted caution.

He realised that in all probability the gunman would not be alone. The chances were that someone would have been left in the shop to keep a watch for the police. If he went straight into the office, he would be committed to a frontal assault, for the safe was in the corner by the door. It would be a matter of a bottle against a gun, the element of surprise lost and a possibility of an attack from the rear, since the man in the shop would inevitably come to his partner's assistance. He decided that he would go into the shop first and tackle whoever was there.

He had taken off his shoes at the foot of the stairs, and now he tiptoed silently along the passage to the open doorway into the back of the shop. Cautiously, he peeped round it. There was not one man, as he had hoped, but two. He recognised Peterson, who went around with Lennox, but the other gangster was a stranger to him; he was a very young chap, perhaps not more than fifteen.

Both youths were standing sideways on to him, crumpling various small articles into a case by the shaded light of a torch.

"I don't like this!" muttered the younger of the two, who was jittering with fear.

"Aw, shut up, you rotten little sissy!" growled Peterson. "You get on with the job, or I'll tell Lennox and he won't cut you square."

"When do we scam?"

"Not till Lennox says the word."

At this moment, Peterson happened to glance at the doorway and saw Len.

"Look out!" he shouted to his companion and charged towards the counter.

Len swung back the bottle of whisky and hurled it with all his force at Peterson's head. It found its mark with a shattering crash and Peterson collapsed over the counter, his face a mask of blood.

Len plunged to the floor as the other youth whipped out a Browning automatic. The young gunman's nerve had been completely broken by Len's sudden appearance and in blind panic he shot off the whole of his magazine in the direction of the counter.

For a matter of seconds, woodwork splintered and smashed round Len, and then he felt a terrific blow on the side of his head. He did not lose consciousness. He heard a shout of pain behind him as Lennox, coming in through the doorway, was shot through the legs, and he also heard the shrill of a policeman's whistle.

Clutching at the counter with both hands, he heaved himself up in time to see the young gunman rush out into the street, straight into the arms of a policeman. Then a red, sticky curtain fell over his eyes and his legs crumpled beneath him.

MR. WEBMAN and Ned suffered no permanent disabilities from their injuries, although their faces had been badly cut and Ned's jaw had been dislocated. Mr. Webman was anxious to leave hospital a few hours after his admission, but he was still groggy with concussion and was advised to remain where he was for two or three days. His reluctant agreement to this suggestion was only obtained after his Hartog box and some tools had been brought to him.

Ned, who had been given pentathol when his jaw was set, woke up feeling that he had drunk a reasonable quantity of the best whisky ever to come out of Ireland. Later in the day, he

was moved into a private ward with Mr. Webman, and by the following morning the two friends were feeling well enough to receive visitors.

In the afternoon, their nurse came into the ward with a calling-card which she handed to Mr. Webman.

"The gentleman's waiting in the hall," she said. "He didn't seem sure whether you'd be pleased to see him."

Mr. Webman, who was tinkering with the parts of the Hartog box, which were spread out on a bed-tray, looked very cross when he read the name on the card.

"Gross impudence!" he exclaimed.

"Who is it, Josh?" asked Ned.

"It's Hewson!"

"Well now, what does he want?"

Mr. Webman gave a little snort. "I can guess. I expect he thinks I'm dying and he wants to make me an offer for my collection."

"Don't be so silly, Mr. Webman!" exclaimed the nurse. "If he reads the papers, he must know there's nothing seriously wrong with you."

Eventually, it was Ned who persuaded Mr. Webman to see his rival. The nurse went off to summon him upstairs.

"I'm still not so sure that Hewson wasn't responsible for us being attacked," grumbled Mr. Webman. But he added quickly, "Of course, I'm not suspecting our Angel of having had anything to do with it."

"I should think not!" exclaimed Ned. "But, Josh, those young things weren't in the least interested in your boxes. The police say all they were after were the money and jewellery in the safe."

"I'm not so sure," repeated Mr. Webman darkly. "For all we know, they might have ransacked the office, had it not been for our gallant Len. However, we shall see. I may decide to accuse Hewson to his face if he insults me with an offer for my boxes."

There was a knock on the door.

"Come in!" snapped Mr. Webman.

Mr. Hewson, tall and cadaverous in his black corduroy suit, entered the room, looking more like Sherlock Holmes than ever.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Webman," he said in a sepulchral tone. "I hope you will forgive me for calling on you without writing first?"

"Good afternoon, Mr. Hewson. That depends," Mr. Webman stared at him stumily, and then feeling that he really was being rather childish allowed himself to smile. "Sit down, won't you? This is my friend, Mr. Sullivan."

Mr. Hewson exchanged greetings with Ned and drew up a chair.

"I'm sure you must be wondering why I'm here, Mr. Webman," he began. "Well, when I read of your misadventure I felt I would like to see you personally to say how sorry I am that you've been injured."

"Very good of you," mumbled Mr. Webman without enthusiasm.

"I know in the past we have had our . . . er . . . misunderstandings, and our suspicions. But when a man who has the same identical interests as oneself has been placed in peril of his life one suddenly feels—how can I put it?—well, differently about him. Possibly it's because all the reluctant admiration which one has felt for him at various times, assumes a far greater importance than the . . . er . . . extreme irritation which he has caused one."

Mr. Hewson leant forward and fixed Mr. Webman with his hawk-like eyes. "I'm afraid I may not be making myself very clear, Mr. Webman, but I ask you to believe me when I say there is no ulterior motive in my visit. I set out here trusting that you will accept my very best wishes for a speedy recovery. With the utmost sincerity, I hope it won't be long before we meet again in the sale-rooms of Mubordam."

Mr. Webman realised that his rival meant every word he said. He was deeply moved. The only reason why he did not reply at once was because there was a lump at the back of his throat. But his eyes, suddenly bright with emotion, told Mr. Hewson that his pilgrimage to the hospital had not been in vain. In future, two of the shrewdest muboxodists in Britain would fight side by side in the safe-room battles.

The tricks and dodges, which in the past both of them had employed to rob each other of some new treasure, would from now on be pooled for use against other collectors. They would form an alliance which might prove to be the downfall of the American invasion, which had become a serious threat, for the muboxodists in the U.S.A. far outnumber those in England.

A happy smile dawned on Mr. Hewson's countenance.

"Shall we shake hands?" he asked. "Yes... yes, let us do that... my friend," Mr. Webman held out his hand.

Mr. Hewson remembered that he had brought with him a peace offering. Putting his hand in his pocket, he said, "I thought you might find some slight interest in this little trifle. It's nothing of importance, but it gives out quite a pretty tune." He handed over a small parcel which Mr. Webman undid with greedy excitement.

The present was a little Victorian box covered with sea-shells. It played "Ye Mariners of England."

"John Coxley, about 1890," exclaimed Mr. Webman. "My friend, how can I thank you enough for this charming little box? I have nothing like it in my collection! I am most grateful!"

"Please don't mention it," said Mr. Hewson, deeply gratified by Mr. Webman's very genuine appreciation. He leant forward again and looked at the components of the Hartog mechanism. "May I ask what you have there?"

"Ah! You will hardly believe me when I tell you."

Mr. Hewson bent closer. "It's difficult to say when it's in pieces, but could it be a Diezemann?"

"No!"

"Of course Friedrich Ehrlich of Berlin used tapered power-shafts—"

"No, it's not his work!"

"It couldn't be...? But no, that would be too fantastic a possibility!"

"What were you going to say?"

"Just for a moment, it crossed my mind that it might be a Van Hartog."

"My friend, it is!"

Mr. Hewson sprang up from his chair. "My dear Mr. Webman!" he gasped.

"There's no doubt about it. See the tiny carved initials on the bed-plate and the angle of stoning of the crown-pilions?"

Mr. Hewson examined the parts with trembling fingers.

"You're right!" he declared in a hushed tone. "Where, may I ask, did you get it?"

"A man in a pub sold it to me for a song."

"What a truly wonderful piece of luck! Why, if this came up for auction, it would fetch the earth."

"There is a snag," confessed Mr. Webman. "So far I have been unable to get it to work."

Mr. Hewson airily dismissed this drawback with a wave of his hand.

"Of course you'll let me know when it's working?"

"Naturally. I hope you'll be the first person to whom I'll play it."

"I shall be honored, Mr. Webman."

They plunged into an all-absorbing technical discussion of Hartog's work, and Mr. Webman wrote down some suggestions made by Mr. Hewson.

Len had also been placed in a private

ward to facilitate questioning by the police and interviewing by newspaper reporters. His escape had been a very narrow one, for the bullet which had grazed his head had only just missed his left temple. He suffered slight concussion and shock, but both these conditions yielded satisfactorily to a good long sleep, and he was told that his stay in hospital was unlikely to exceed three days.

He awoke to find himself acclaimed as a hero, and it must be admitted that he took full advantage of the position. Until now he had been a very insignificant member of the community, although his morale had been given a temporary boost by the Angel's appearance at the Club and Jenny's subsequent interest in him. But the fact remains that no one had ever visualised him in the role of a lion-hearted fighter capable of routing single-handed the gang which had caused so much trouble in the neighborhood.

Unfortunately, he caused some confusion in the minds of the police and the public as to what really happened, for he was inclined to embroider his account of the affair with highly dramatic touches, borrowed from various gangster films he had seen at the Palace. Due to discrepancies in the details which he gave to individual reporters, people who read more than one paper were somewhat puzzled by the different accounts of the "Pawn Shop Gun-battle."

However, his friends and acquaintances took the charitable view that he must have been interviewed while he was still half-conscious and that it was "a shame to bother the poor chap." Some people, who hardly knew him, added a rider to the effect that he must be having all this publicity.

Of course Len had seldom been happier. There was only one fly in the ointment: Jenny did not visit him. He felt strongly that she owed him the deepest apologies for calling him "a poor fish," "a humptious looney," and several other insulting things on Sunday night. Lying back on his pillow with closed eyes, he pictured her coming into the room on tiptoes and kneeling beside his bed as she begged for forgiveness.

WHEN Sergeant Lane came to question him, Jenny's name was not mentioned until the end of their conversation. The detective spent nearly an hour in trying to get the correct story of Len's battle with the gunmen.

"Will I be wanted at the trial?" Len asked him.

"Trial?" exclaimed Sergeant Lane, pocketing his notebook. "There won't be a trial, son."

"What?" said Len.

"Lennox and his boys will be dealt with in the Juvenile Court. They'll have a nice cosy chat with some dear old souls—that's all."

"You mean they won't be sent to prison?"

Sergeant Lane winced. "What a brutal mind you must have, Len! They may be asked if they would care to go to an approved school, which until recently was one of the historic homes of England, and they'd be darn stupid if they said they'd rather not. Lovely place it is! Has its own cinema and a posh swimming-pool and grounds which make the playing-fields of Eton look like a rubbish dump in comparison."

"Sergeant Lane," said Len, "is Jenny okay?"

"She was when I saw her at breakfast this morning."

"Oh, that's fine... fine! I—I just wondered."

"What did you wonder?" asked Sergeant Lane a little ironically.

"Whether she might be dropping in."

"I wouldn't count on it, son. Anyway, why should you worry about a little thing like that? The girls will be fighting to get at you when you come out of this place."

"Yes, I suppose so," he agreed.

Later in the day, he was visited by his mother and Mrs. Trap.

"Hallo, my lad," she said, "you've certainly given us all a surprise."

Mrs. Burrows nodded gloomily. "Len, are they looking after you all right?"

"Oh yes, Mum," he answered. "I'm treated fine. Smashing grub, too. Chicken for dinner today."

He saw her hurt expression and added hastily, "Mind you, it's not like what I get at home. No comparison! They can't beat your cooking, Mum."

She cheered up a little. "I was in such a state when I heard, Len. But Mrs. Trap has been a wonderful standby. She was round quick as lightning when she heard you'd been shot."

"Yes, you've caused us all a lot of anxiety, my lad," said Mrs. Trap. "But still, we're quite proud of you in the Street. When you come home there's to be flags hung outside the house and a placard saying 'Welcome Home, Brave Len!—that was Mr. Baxter's idea.'"

"That'll be nice," said Len. And he meant it.

Mrs. Trap nodded. "Now are you going to try and be a better boy when you get home?"

He did not like this question at all. It was not the sort of thing anyone should ask a hero. But he was in no mood for an argument.

"I expect so, Mrs. Trap," he mumbled.

"And you're not going to worry the life out of your poor mother by having any more tantrums?"

"Don't expect so."

"And you're not going to bring home any more bad-mannered girls?"

"Don't expect so."

Mrs. Trap sighed comfortably. "In that case, I really believe you're learning some consideration for other people. Len, now we're not going to stay with you any longer, because what you need is plenty of sleep. So kiss your mother and say goodbye, then we'll be off."

His mother's cold lips pressed against his cheek like the tentacle of an octopus.

"Good-bye, Mum. Keep cheery! I'll soon be back."

"Good-bye, my lad," said Mrs. Trap. "We're quite proud of you."

When they had left the room, he gave a deep sigh of relief.

Mrs. Trap was his only unwelcome visitor. The reporters and friends, who visited him during the remainder of his stay in hospital, sent his ego soaring and his disappointment about Jenny not coming was almost crowded out of his mind.

His last visitor was the Angel.

At least, he was quite sure the Angel was there in the room, but of course it must have been a dream, since the time which she chose for her visit was the middle of the night. All he knew was that he opened his eyes and saw her standing beside his bed. She had brought her harp.

"Hallo, miss," he said softly. "It's nice of you to come."

"Would you like me to play for you?" she asked him.

"You bet!"

The room was filled by the wonderful music of her harp and, as he lay there with half-closed eyes, he was transported into a world which he had never known. It was a world of blue mountain peaks, of deep green valleys and sparkling streams, of sweet-scented flowers.

And then quite suddenly she stopped playing.

"Len, I want to talk to you," she said.

"Yes, miss?" he answered.

"You must try to keep a sense of proportion."

"What do you mean?" he asked her in surprise.

"You and I know that you're not really very much of a hero," she said gently.

He began to bluster in indignation, but his words died into silence and he felt humble and small.

"That's so, miss," he repeated in a whisper.

"You were very, very lucky."

"That so, miss," he repeated in a whisper.

"You haven't won your own personal battle yet. Remember that when you get out of hospital. Of course you're bound to love all the feeling and hero-worship you'll get, but try to be honest with yourself; you'll find it will help in the fight which really does matter—the fight to understand yourself."

She began to play again, but this time the music of her harp spoke of the night sky, of the friendly twinkling stars and of a great yellow moon with a smile on its ancient face.

He dreamt no more that night.

On Friday evening, the main hall of the Club was packed out ten minutes before Mr. Webman's lecture was due to commence. Normally, there would have been fewer than twenty people present, for the Club's lectures were notoriously dull, but Mr. Webman's name still held the interest-value of one which had made headlines in the national Press. The gangways were blocked with extra chairs, boys and girls sat crushed together on the window-sills.

Len was to introduce Mr. Webman to the audience, and that was an added attraction, despite the fact that the "Club Hero" had already made one public appearance since leaving hospital and had been presented with a leather wallet as a token of his fellow members' esteem.

When the curtains across the stage were drawn back to reveal Len and Mr. Webman standing behind a trestle table covered with all shapes and sizes of musical-boxes, a great wave of cheering, clapping and whistling swept the audience. Several times Len raised his hand and smiled in a sickly fashion, but nearly half a minute passed before the audience would let him begin the introductory speech which he had so carefully prepared.

"Well, folks, thanks for the welcome," he began breathlessly. "I know Mr. Webman is as pleased about it as I am."

He was interrupted by a shout from the back.

"Tell us about Monday night!"

"Yeah, we want to hear the story from you!" came another shout.

Len, revelling in this hero-worship, once again raised his hand.

"No, no, really I didn't do much!" he protested.

"After all, anyone can throw a bottle, can't they? Pity it was full!" (Laughter.)

"Anyway, folks, we're here this evening to listen to Mr. Webman and his musical-boxes and I'm sure you'll find what he's got to tell you much more interesting than what I could tell you about Monday night."

Mr. Webman hardly heard Len's introductory speech, which lasted nearly two minutes. His attention was riveted on the sea of young faces in front of him. Already the audience was beginning to settle down into an unexpected silence; he sensed clearly that very few of these teenagers imagined he would have anything of interest to say. He began to wish with all his

heart that he had not come. It was a waste of time, and more than that, because Muboxdom meant so very much to him.

Giving his lecture, displaying his treasures to these youngsters, who had grown up in the age of radiograms, films and television, would be like pillorying an aged mistress whose outward beauty has faded but whose inward charm is as great as ever, although it can only be perceived by people of strong imagination with an understanding of a leisurely, peaceful way of life which has long since vanished.

He looked down at his notes and realised the seeming impossibility of the task which he had set himself. In the space of an hour, how could he arouse even a passing interest in the examples of superb craftsmanship which he had brought with him? How could he possibly make his youthful audience appreciate such marvels of mechanical invention as Lombardo's Regulating Gear and James Drysdale's Spring-barrelled Finissage? The answer came to him in the memory of his dream about the Angel; he recalled the vivid scenes which he had witnessed when the musical-boxes had "come to life."

As Len ended his address, Mr. Webman stuffed his notes back into his pocket and bowed slightly to the politely clapping audience.

"Boys and girls, thank you for your welcome," he said, "but I'm afraid that I am rather an impostor. You see, the title of my lecture—'The history and mechanics of the musical-box'—is rather misleading. I am not going to say much about either its history or its mechanics. What is more, I want your help during the next hour. . . . Yes, the help of every one of you."

"How can we help you?" you may ask. I'll tell you. I want you to imagine you are in one of those space-and-time ships, of which there are so many stories in those magazines Len reads when he should be working." Here, Mr. Webman got his first laugh and it gave him confidence.

"I want you to imagine that you are travelling back through the centuries to visit many foreign lands where you will listen to the conversations of the inhabitants and get some idea of the kind of lives they lived."

"Now you may think that is rather a lot to ask of you—that it will require a great deal of imagination—but in practice I don't think you will find it so difficult. You see, you really will be listening to people of many races and of many ages. You will be hearing them speak in the universal language of music as clearly and in precisely the same way as they did when they were alive. The men who made these musical-boxes which I have brought along this evening were musicians, inventors and mechanics rolled into one. Several of them were geniuses who put their very souls into the instruments they created."

Mr. Webman paused and leant forward. "Now I ask you, can the fine radiogram, which I'm told you have in your canteen, produce the direct voices of men who died long ago? You will agree that it cannot do so. The nearer approach which the radio and the gramophone can make to letting us hear the voices of people who died before the turn of the century is to broadcast or record the music of a musical-box."

"And so, this evening you are going to hear something which is rather astounding—something which does require a little imagination. If one is going to appreciate its excitement and beauty and often its humor, but I am

sure you will find the effort worth while."

"So let us climb into that space-and-time ship and be off. Are we all on? Are we ready to start?" Mr. Webman did not expect any response to his questions, but a shattering "Yeah!" went up from his audience.

"Ah, that is good!" He picked up an African "Zanze," a drum-like affair of wood and metal. A succession of long, deep, wailing notes filled the hall.

"We have travelled back two thousand, one hundred and fifty years. We are in a clearing in the middle of an African jungle." Mr. Webman spoke in a slow, impressive voice. "This instrument has been made by a witch doctor, and his tribe believe that the sounds which come from it are warnings and prophecies made by warriors killed in battle. Shortly, a human sacrifice is to be offered up on the fire which has just been lit."

From this point onwards, Mr. Webman held his audience in a tighter grip than that exercised by any film shown at the Palace in recent months. As he played each box, he would bring to life in vivid word-pictures the setting in which it was first heard and the sort of people who listened to it. In the short space of an hour, he had made even the most sophisticated and blasé members of the Club feel for the time being, at any rate, that the musical-box was a more wonderful contrivance than the latest television set or the most complicated radiogram.

He was careful to keep his talk strictly within the hour; he left his audience feeling that they had not heard nearly enough. Only at the end of his lecture did he permit himself to express the hope which lay behind his coming here at all.

"Well, my friends, we've come to the end of our trip into the past and here we are back in East London, in the middle of the twentieth century. Now there is something I would like to say to those of you who have enjoyed this brief excursion and would like other ones in the privacy of their own homes."

"What I want to say is this: lying forgotten in attics and cupboards, in second-hand shops, and even sometimes on rubbish dumps, are still many thousands of musical-boxes. I would go so far as to say that there must be at least a dozen of you here tonight who has a relative or friend owning an interesting box. Perhaps there is even one among you who has a real treasure in his or her home."

"Isn't it a pity that these . . . these 'space-and-time ships' should be abandoned? Haven't we, living in this age of mass-production, something to learn from the patient craftsmanship of the men who made them?"

"Collecting and repairing musical-boxes can be very much more than a hobby. It can be both an education and a means of finding a deep joy and satisfaction in life. It is one of the few spare-time pursuits—one of the very few—which still holds out the reasonable prospect to everyone of making a really important find one day. Thank you for listening to me with such patience. Good night . . . my friends."

The applause was tremendous and Mr. Webman felt that this was the most moving experience of his life. Indeed, he had difficulty in concealing his emotion; his glasses misted over and his lips began to tremble.

Then, while the cheering and the clapping and the whistling was still going on, he felt a touch on his shoulder and heard Len's voice saying, "You were simply smashing. Guv! Crumbs, you'll be mobbed in a second! Let's get alone to the canteen."

They left the stage and went through to the empty canteen, but a few

moments later their table was surrounded by would-be muskoxidiats who lost no time in launching a barrage of questions. Before Mr. Webman left the Club, he invited anyone who found a broken musical-box to bring it along to his shop and he would give advice about its repair.

Jenny, who had been one of his audience, got home at eleven o'clock. Her father was still up, writing at his desk in the sitting-room. When she came in to say good night, he was addressing the envelope of a letter which was going to cost him a lot of money.

"Hallo, Jen, what sort of an evening did you have?" he asked her as she came over to him.

"Wonderful!" she answered. "A new boy-friend?"

"Good gracious not! I went to Mr. Webman's lecture at the Club."

"That doesn't sound very exciting."

"Dad, it was absolutely marvellous! I must say I never knew musical-boxes could be so fascinating. Can you remember where that one of ours has got to?"

"You mean the one Aunt Meg sent me for a Christmas present?"

"Yes, what's happened to it?"

"I haven't the foggiest. It never worked anyway."

"But getting it to play is half the excitement! I've a good mind to go up to the attic and see if I can find it."

"Better wait till tomorrow. Tell me what you think of this letter before I stick it up."

The letter, which he handed to her, was addressed to: The Maestro, International Headquarters, The School of Home Harmony, 126 Mulstead House, Nuneaton.

"Dear Maestro," (she read). "As you know, I have now completed your excellent course of home-study piano-playing, and I don't mind saying I have found it thoroughly enjoyable. I am now quite a proficient pianist. However, I am anxious to start learning the harp, having recently met someone during the course of my professional duties who plays it beautifully. I notice from your prospectus that you claim to be able to teach any instrument by post, so will you kindly send me details about your course in harp-playing. I am ready to begin my studies at once. Yours sincerely, Richard Lane (Detective-Sergeant)."

"Well, I never!" said Jenny, handing back the letter. "What's Mum going to say?"

"I'm going to tell her she can have her washing-machine. I suppose one can get them on the H.P.?"

"I should think so. She'll be jolly pucked. And personally I'm all for a harp, too." She hesitated. "Dad, being serious for a moment, do you really believe that girl was an angel?"

"I do," he answered quickly.

"I believe she was, too. But the thing I can't understand is what she saw in Len."

"You seemed to see quite a lot in him for a few days."

"Oh, but I admit I was all wrong about him, she exclaimed impatiently."

"Dad, you should have seen and heard him this evening! He was dreadful!"

"How?"

"He was swanking like anything. I know it sounds a beastly thing to say, but I think he must have had a lot of luck in that business on Monday night."

"Tell me what really happened."

"Jenny, I'll tell you this much: Len had some luck and perhaps he didn't do all the things which he told the papers he'd done. But—and it's quite a big 'but'—allowing for all his exaggerations, there must have been a few moments when he showed real, fighting courage. That had got far more in him than I ever suspected. Down

beneath all that washerwoman stuff there's a man—and a darn good man at that."

Jenny yawned. "Glad you think so. Well, I'm off to bed. Good night, Dad."

"Good night, Jen," he said. The youth of Britain today responds so keenly to real-life stories of bravery and adventure that anyone who is cited by the newspapers as having been the hero or heroine of an exciting episode, is liable to receive a large number of congratulatory letters from boys and girls all over the country.

Len was no exception to this rule. During the ten days following his discharge from hospital, he received dozens of letters. Many of his fans asked for photos, and in order to comply with their requests he had his picture taken by a local photographer, from whom he ordered sixty small prints. He soon found that fame can be a very expensive business; another disadvantage was the time it took to answer the letters, for he was extremely conscientious and each lucky fan got a slightly different reply.

Most evenings he stayed at home, dealing with his correspondence, and although he thought quite a lot about Jenny, he made no attempt to get in touch with her. He still considered that the first overtures of reconciliation should come from her. And besides, he was enjoying the unaccustomed peace of his home. Since his return from hospital, his mother really had treated him like a hero; she had given him a new suit and had bought him lots of nice things to eat.

IT is hard to say how long this pleasant state of amiability between mother and son might have lasted had it not been for two letters which arrived amongst others on Wednesday morning. When he passed them to her over the breakfast-table, she was very upset.

He could understand her distress over one of the letters, for it came from the Admiralty and invited him to attend a special medical inspection in just under a fortnight's time. The writer expressed the hope that Len had now reached the required standard of physical fitness, as the Navy was only too anxious to recruit a young man who had shown such marked courage and initiative in a tight spot.

"Of course you're not going?" she asked him miserably.

"Of course I am!" he answered. "Wild horses wouldn't keep me away."

"You don't ever think of me."

"Oh, Mum, for heaven's sake be reasonable! You know perfectly well all I care about is getting into subs."

"But you aren't strong enough, Len! You're a very delicate boy! You need building up and looking after. Do you suppose you'll be able to have a hot-water bottle in your bed on the submarine? And what about your tonics? There'll be no one to remind you to take them."

"Anyway, I'm going to that medical board, and nothing you can say, Mum, will make any difference."

Realising that threats and arguments were useless, she looked at the next letter. Her distress over this one was harder to understand, for it seemed innocent enough.

The writer was a Mr. Sam Heaton, of Woolwich; he described himself as being a friend of the late Mr. Burrows, and said he would very much like to meet Len in order to congratulate him personally on his brave act. He invited him to Sunday dinner.

"Do you remember him, Mum?" asked Len, as she handed him back the letter with a tight-lipped expression.

"Yes," she answered shortly.

"What sort of a chap was he?"

"A scallywag! A good-for-nothing, sneaking lout! I wonder he hasn't drunk himself to death by now."

Len had seldom heard his mother speak with such vehemence. He looked down at the letter again. "Anyway, it's nice of him to write."

"Len, that man was your Dad's greatest enemy!"

"But he says he was a friend!"

"He was the one who led your Dad astray. Sometimes they used to go along together to the sergeants' mess at Woolwich Arsenal and twice your Dad came home in a disgusting state. Nearly murdered you and me. Then, as often as once or twice a week, he would go and have supper with Sam and his wife—she was just as bad as him." She added bitterly, "They never once asked me—not that I'd have gone, of course!"

"I certainly won't go and see him," said Len. "In fact, I don't know that I shall even answer his letter."

"That's a sensible boy!" said Mrs. Burrows, looking slightly more cheerful. "Forget you ever heard from him."

But Len did not forget. In fact, he thought about it all day. And he also thought about the advice which the Angel had given to him: "Find your father." He felt very strongly that he should accept Mr. Heaton's invitation, but at breakfast he had been sensible enough to realise that if he confided this feeling to his mother there would be a dreadful scene.

He posted his acceptance without telling her he had done so.

On Sunday morning he left the house soon after breakfast, saying that he had a date with a new girl. It was a very hot day and by the time he reached Woolwich he was beginning to wish he had refused the invitation. How much nicer it would have been to have gone to the Lido, taking with him a sandwich lunch. True, he could not have gone into the water, as his head was still bandaged, but he could have sunbathed.

Most likely he would have been able to strike up a friendship with one of the many young girls who would be there, and he might even have asked her to come to the Palace with him after a high-tea at the Caf. However, he was somewhat cheered by the thought that if Mr. Heaton were not too much of a gossip he could still be at the Lido by half-past three.

Mr. Heaton turned out to be very different from Len's conception of him. It was hard to imagine anyone who looked less of a scallywag than this tall, upright man whose sharp blue eyes and waxed grey moustache gave him the look of a retired sergeant-major—which was what he happened to be.

His manner was at first rather shy. During dinner, which he had cooked himself, he was content to listen to Len's dramatic account of the "Battle Of The Pawn Shop." He supplied a few details about himself; Len gathered that his wife had died about five years ago, but that his son-in-law and daughter now shared his small council house; they were out for the day.

Mr. Heaton hardly mentioned the late Mr. Burrows until after dinner, when he suggested to Len that they should drink their tea out-of-doors. They carried their cups into a small, neat garden and sat in deck-chairs in the shade of a cherry tree.

His host offered him a cigarette, and after lighting a pipe said, "I'm very glad you've come along here today. I've got some photos I think you ought to have." He took out of his pocket some faded brown snapshots and handed them to Len.

"Thank you, Mr. Heaton, but why should I have these?"

"They're of your father. We were

together in the Gunners during the First World War. Of course I could have sent you by post, but I rather fancied giving them to you personally."

Len carefully examined each photo. When they were taken in France, his father had been a tall, rangy youth with a mop of fair hair; he closely resembled Len.

Seeing these informal pictures gave Len the strangest feeling. For some unaccountable reason he felt he wanted to burst into tears.

"Thank you," he repeated in a subdued voice. "I'm very glad to have them."

"I don't suppose you can remember him at all, can you?"

"No, I can't. I was only three when he died."

"What a pity!" Mr. Heaton sucked his pipe. "I remember how proud he used to be of you."

"My Mum has told me we didn't hit it off very well together. He got a bit queer towards the end, y'know."

"Queer?" Mr. Heaton's question cracked across Len like a whiplash.

"What I mean is . . . that is my Mum has always said he was no good, and . . . Well, I'm sorry, Mr. Heaton, I really don't know anything about him."

Len was now thoroughly flustered, for the eyes looking in his were like splinters of blue ice.

"Now listen to me, young Burrows," said Mr. Heaton quietly. "Your father was one of the finest and bravest men I have seen, my privilege to serve with in thirty-five years of soldiering. And I knew him very well after he was invalided out of the Army. We went up to Buckingham Palace together to get our gongs."

Len interrupted him. "My Dad got a medal?"

"Hasn't your mother told you that? Then it may interest you to learn that he got both the M.M. and the D.C.M. and, if you ask me, he should have got the V.C."

Len was completely stunned by this revelation. He had gone white to the lips and his head was throbbing painfully. He could think of nothing to say.

Seeing his distress, Mr. Heaton spoke in a more kindly tone:

"Look here, my boy, I can well believe it's not your fault you don't know anything about your father, but I think it's high time you learnt what kind of a man he was. In fact, you're not going to leave here until I've told you all I know about him."

"I want you to," whispered Len. "I want you to tell me everything."

"All right. But I'm warning you now that some of the things I've got to say may hurt. I'd be the last person to put a boy against his mother, and I hope nothing I say will make you feel differently about her, but on the other hand I realise you've been shown only one side of the picture. It's the other side I'm going to make you see."

"I know Mum and Dad never got along well together," said Len dully.

"No, they didn't. Your mother hated your father because he didn't come up to her expectations—he couldn't bring in the money she wanted. It's true he never did earn much—he was always changing jobs. However, you must remember he had a rough time in the war—a hell of a rough time. As you know, his wounds were eventually the cause of his death."

Len's head jerked up. "He died of drink?"

"That is sheer and utter poppycock!" said Mr. Heaton slowly.

After a moment's silence, Len said, "Please begin from when you first met Dad."

The meeting with Mr. Heaton had

a profound effect on Len. His immediate reaction was one of tremendous pride in a father whose very existence he had tried to forget. But when he was lying in bed that night he experienced a much deeper feeling which can best be described as a new-born awareness of himself as a man. His father lived within him.

On awakening next morning he did something which he had never done before: he went downstairs and made the early-morning tea. When he brought his mother a cup in her room, she sat up in bed and stared at him in dismay. Ignoring his happy "Good morning, Mum," she said, "Are you all right, Len?"

"Never felt better," he answered. "By the way, I'm getting the breakfast this morning."

While they were eating their bacon and sausages, she hardly took her eyes off him. She realised that something had happened to him, but he gave her no clue as to what it might be. Nor would he ever tell her—there would be no point in doing so. But from now on his life together would be very different. She would soon become aware that, for the first time in seventeen years she had a man about the house. In many ways, the change in him would benefit her. He had always been very lazy in his home, but in future he would take on a share of the household chores.

MRS. BURROWS was not the only one to notice a difference in Len. Many people, with whom he came in contact during the next few days, remarked on his changed manner and his changed appearance, for he now stood up straight and there was a new strength in his features. The general opinion was that his head injury had affected his brain, but everyone found his new personality very agreeable. In particular, Mr. Webman was delighted by the efficiency and charm of manner which his assistant suddenly began to display.

"I don't know what's come over Len," he confided to Ned one evening. "Since Monday he has been quite different. All at once, he seems to have grown up."

"Sure, it's Her Blistfulness that must have been at work on him," declared Ned. "Hasn't she done something for you and I? Why shouldn't she have done something for Len?"

"My friend, I think you're right," said Mr. Webman.

Only one person remained sceptical of the change in Len. Jenny stubbornly refused to believe that he could have altered, although she was hardly in a position to judge, since she had not spoken to him since the evening of their quarrel. Various mutual friends had told her how different he had become, but she was inclined to dismiss their comments as mere hero-worship.

Jenny's pride had been badly hurt. On their first evening out together, she had been sure that there was more in him than met the eye, but on the following Sunday she had been completely disillusioned. How dare he assume that she was going to marry him? What unutterable cheek! She told herself she would rather marry a cosh-boy than a hag-ridden boob like Len.

Perhaps he did possess a certain amount of courage, but she certainly was not going to join the group of disreputable girls who swarmed round him whenever he entered the Club. Her stubborn, defiant attitude left no room for calm reflection. She tried to banish him from her thoughts in the same way as she might have done a starving alley-cat, on whom she had taken pity, only to be scratched by it.

It was her young sister, Patsy, who

was responsible for her meeting Len again. From the many films which she had seen, Patsy had formed the unshakable belief that if a girl of her sister's age took a violent dislike to a man it was the surest proof of her love for him that anyone could want. It is hardly necessary to add that she no longer regarded Len as "a mess." In common with many of her contemporaries, she now saw him as a hero whom she would be proud to have as a brother-in-law.

On Thursday morning Len received a letter from her. It was written in green ink on violet paper:

"Dear Len.—This is very secret. Jenny is not really mad at all. She's crazy about you and wants to see you awfully. But she thinks you are mad at her. She is all mixed up inside, and it makes me miserable to see the way she is not eating and not sleeping. Could you turn up here one evening sort of by surprise? If you think this is a good idea, why not make it this evening, because she is not going out but Mummy and Dad are. They are going to a dull old symphony concert. If you come round about nine, you will find Jenny napping by herself in the lounge. I shall be up in bed asleep, and I will take steps to see the Twins are asleep, too.—Love, Patsy. P.S.—Kindly bring me a photo of yourself."

At first Len decided to ignore this letter, being highly dubious of the truth of its statements. But he changed his mind. After getting the letter from Mr. Heaton, he felt it would be flying in the face of providence to ignore a suggestion of going to see anyone. Besides, more than anything else, he wanted to patch up his quarrel with Jenny.

And so, shortly after nine o'clock, he rang the front-door bell of the Lanes' house. He had brought with him a good excuse for his call.

Jenny, who was in pyjamas, was combing her hair, which she had just washed, in front of the gas-stove in the sitting-room. When she heard the bell she slipped on her dressing-gown and went to the front door.

Len was rather taken aback when he saw her; he imagined that he had got her out of bed.

"Hallo, Jenny," he said. "I'm terribly sorry for coming round at this hour. Is there anything you want?" she asked him coldly.

He held up an old book he was carrying. "I brought this round for your father. He said he might be going to take up harp-playing and this is rather an interesting old book on learning the harp which happened to come in this morning. I thought he might like it."

"Oh, thank you," she said, taking it. "How much was it?"

"Don't worry about that! It was nothing at all."

"How much was it?" she repeated.

"Dad's out this evening, but he'd be very cross if I didn't pay you."

"It was meant to be a present," he said. "but if you must know, it cost one and fourpence."

"Come in, will you, and I'll give you the money."

As they went through to the sitting-room he caught a glimpse of fair pig-tails hanging over the banisters on the landing. Jenny went across to her father's desk, opened a cash-box, and took out some change.

Len, glancing round the room, saw a massive harp standing in a corner.

"How's your father getting on with his lessons?" he asked.

"He only got the harp today," she answered. "Here's your money. He'll be very glad to have the book."

"That's all right, Jenny."

Her expression was completely blank.

But now he was here he was determined to try to effect some kind of reconciliation.

"Jenny, I wonder if we could have a talk?"

"I don't feel particularly in the mood for conversation tonight, but I'm quite easy if there's anything special you want to say."

"I want to say I'm sorry."

"What for?"

"Oh, come off it, Jenny, you must know! I want to try and wipe out that rotten Sunday evening." He took a step towards her, but she hurriedly backed away.

"Look here, Len," she said, "if you've come along with the idea of staging a kiss-and-make-up scene, I'm afraid you're going to be disappointed. I don't want to hurt your feelings, and I'm probably missing a lot, but I am not one of your admirers, and I don't think I ever could be after that Sunday night. So can't we agree to go our own separate ways, and no ill-feelings on either side?"

"Very well," he agreed quietly. "I can understand exactly how you feel."

He turned to go, but at that moment they both heard a creak in the passage. Jenny was across to the door in a flash, and, flinging it open, confronted Patsy who stared up at her in dismay.

"I might have guessed!" said Jenny, putting her hands on her hips. "No wonder you wouldn't say who you were writing to yesterday! And I was thinking just how it was odd the Twins had gone to bed so early."

Patsy shook her head quickly. "I don't know what you mean! I just came down to get my book and—"

"You tipped off Len that Mummy and Dad were going out! You deserve a jolly good spanking. Go to your room!"

Patsy fled upstairs.

Jenny turned to Len. "So you're in league with my kid-sister! I must say I never thought you'd sink that low, Len Burrows! What did you offer her for a tip-off—a bag of lollipops or a signed photo?"

"I didn't offer her anything at all!"—Len's angry protest was interrupted by the peeling of the front-door bell.

Jenny went to the door and opened it.

"OH!" she cried.

"Good evening," said the Angel, giving her a lovely smile.

"Good evening," whispered Jenny, wondering if she ought to curtsy.

"Is your father in?"

"No, he's gone to a concert."

"Oh dear, what a pity! I promised to come and give him a harp-lesson some time."

"He'll be dreadfully sorry to have missed you. Won't you come in for a minute?"

"Thank you, I'd like to."

Len was still standing in the passage.

"Hallo, Len," said the Angel. "How nice to see you again!"

"It's good to see you, miss," he answered.

"I must congratulate you on capturing those burglars! I read about it in the papers." She turned to Jenny. "You must be very proud of him."

Jenny did not reply.

The three of them went into the sitting-room. The Angel at once walked across to the harp.

"I'm so glad your father has a harp. I wondered whether I should bring mine, in case he hadn't got one yet."

"Are you still staying in London, miss?" Len asked her.

"Yes, and I'm having a simply wonderful time." She began to examine the harp. "This is a very nice one," she said.

"Dad's ever so pleased with it," said Jenny.

"While you're here, miss, will you play for us?" Len asked.

"Yes, of course I will," the Angel answered. "What sort of music would you like?"

"Anything! I mean everything I've heard you play has been terrific!"

"Something romantic perhaps—something written specially for people who are in love?"

"Well, I'm sorry to say—" began Jenny.

The Angel cut her short with a gentle laugh. "Of course I know you've had a quarrel—I can tell that from your expressions. But shall we see what a little music can do? It often helps, you know."

"It won't change my feelings about Len," said Jenny, "but I'd love to hear you play."

"Very well. Let's move the harp into the middle of the room, then I suggest you turn round the sofa and sit down."

A FEW minutes later, she began to play the melody with which Len was now familiar. As she struck the first chords, she said to Jenny, "This is called 'The Song of Heaven'—I always play it first."

Jenny, who was listening to it for the first time, thought she had never heard anything more lovely. A feeling of peace and happiness began to steal over her. With a little sigh, she nestled back against the sofa cushions and tucked her legs beneath her.

The Angel spoke softly while she still played.

"Jenny, I want you to sing for me. I thought you sang so nicely at the Club that night."

"I'd like to, but I don't expect we know the same songs," she answered.

"We may do. Mention one."

Jenny thought hard. On the spur of the moment it was difficult to suggest a song which would be suitable to an accompaniment by a celestial harpist.

"Do you know a song called 'Bless This House'?" she asked at last.

The Angel nodded gently, and without a break in the music played the introductory bars.

The combination of Jenny's beautiful young voice and the Angel's harp-playing took Len right outside the reality of this world. It was an experience which he would always remember with reverence.

When the song was ended, the Angel said, "And now I'm going to play you something which perhaps you will never hear again. It is called very simply, 'A Serenade for Lovers.'"

Jenny stiffened slightly, but only for a moment. As the silver-toned notes filled the room she sank back against the cushions with half-closed eyes. The music flowed through her mind like a crystal stream. She felt Len's hand touch hers; their fingers interlaced and she turned her head towards him.

No words passed between them, but slowly they drew closer together. He put his arm round her shoulder and her soft hair brushed his cheek. After the gentle rapture of their first kiss, a feeling of drowsiness began to settle on them. The music was carrying them into that world of tranquillity and beauty which most of us have glimpsed in our dreams.

Jenny's parents got home just before midnight. Severe time in his pockets for the first time, Len said.

"That's what I call a good evening."

"It was nice," agreed his wife. "I must say it's quite a thrill hearing a big orchestra like that."

"Will you come to another concert with me some time?"

"Yes, I'd like to. Dick, you ought to learn to play that 'William Tell Overture' on your harp. It would sound lovely."

"By the way, I had a letter from the Maestro by the evening post. He says he hasn't got a ready-made course in harp-playing, but he's fixing one up specially for me."

"That's kind of him."

He found the key and they went into the house.

"Like a hot drink?" she asked.

"I wouldn't mind one," he answered, opening the sitting-room door. "Christmas!" He stood stock still in the doorway.

"What's up?" asked his wife behind him.

He moved to one side. The room was illuminated by the glow of the gas-fire. The strings of the harp, which stood in the centre of the room, shone like thin golden threads, and through them could be seen Len and Jenny sitting on the sofa with their arms round each other's shoulders. They were sleeping as peacefully as children who have had a happy day in the country, and the light from the fire behind them had put a halo round their fair heads, which were touching.

"Well I never!" whispered Mrs. Lane. "Wouldn't that make a pretty picture? But what's the harp doing there?"

"As a detective, I can make a good guess," answered her husband. "Mary, we've missed a visit from a V.H.P. this evening."

"What's a V.H.P.?"

"A Very Heavenly Person."

More than fifty members of the Club availed themselves of Mr. Webman's invitation to bring him their musical-box problems. Hardly an evening passed without a visit from several boys and girls who brought with them newly discovered treasures. They would gather in his office and watch him with fascinated interest as he demonstrated such repairs as cylinder replanning and comb-cleaning. Then, at about ten o'clock, he would make tea in his musical-teapot and for about half an hour would play for them some of his boxes.

Although the youthful muboxodists left him little time for carrying out maintenance on his own collection, it can truthfully be stated that he had not known such contentment for years. Indeed, it might be said that he had discovered the secret of happiness.

Some of his students would in time lose interest in musical-boxes as they grew older and more sophisticated, but it is doubtful if any of them would forget those enjoyable evenings in the little office, gaining an appreciation of craftsmanship and music at the same time.

On Monday afternoon, eleven days after the last recorded appearance of the Angel, Mr. Webman was in the shop by himself. Len had gone to his Naval medical examination and was not due back till about three o'clock. On the counter in front of Mr. Webman was the Hartox box, from which he had so far been unable to coax a single note; he was beginning to despair of ever getting it to play.

He had just finished re-assembling the instrument for the sixth time when Len returned.

"Hallo, Len, how did you get on?" he asked.

"They're taking me 'Guv'."

"You're going into the Submarine Service?"

"I hope so!"

Mr. Webman stretched out his hand. "Congratulations my friend! Many, many congratulations!"

Len flushed with pleasure, but at the same time he felt rather sad.
"Thanks, Guv," he answered. "But now I've actually got in, I'll kind of miss being here, I reckon."
"But it's what you want to do?"
"Oh, yes!"

Mr. Webman opened the lid of the Hartog box and closed it again.

"It's no use," he murmured half to himself. "Hartog was a genius. Who am I to try and read the mind of a genius?" He gave a sigh and looked up at his assistant with a smile. "How long have I got to find someone to take your place?"

"A fortnight."
He shook his head slowly. "No, I would say about two days. When Jenny was here yesterday evening, she told me she's starting her summer holiday today. Wouldn't it be nice if you could go with her to the Club holiday-camp in Norfolk?"

Len hesitated. "She did suggest it, but I wouldn't dream of leaving you in a spot."

"You won't be doing so. About half a dozen of your friends have asked me for employment. I wish I could employ them all, but that is impossible. I will choose one."

"That would be marvellous, but are you quite sure it'll be all right for me to go off with Jenny on Thursday?"

"Quite sure, my boy. But before you go, bring her along to see me again. I want to give her a little engagement present."

"Okay, Guv. Thanks very much. Actually, you'll be seeing her this evening at Mr. Sullivan's party at the Red Lion. He's asked us both, y'know."
"Good! And we will shut up the shop tomorrow for a few hours while we're at the wedding."

The telephone rang in the office. Mr. Webman hurried out of the shop, taking with him the Hartog box.

The call was from Mr. Schwartz.
"Hallo, Josh," said the solicitor, "when I came back to the office, I found your message to ring you up."

"Ah, yes, my friend, I would like to come and see you professionally one day this week."

"Wednesday at two-thirty?"
"That would suit me very well, Franz. I am bringing with me a new will, and this time I will not change it again."

"That sounds very definite—I can hardly wait to hear who the fortunate legatee may be!"

"I can tell you now. They are my children."

"Josh, what have you been up to?"
"I will make things clearer when we meet. But now I have five children and they must be provided for."

"So!" The solicitor sounded very puzzled.

"Well, my friend, I won't keep you any longer. I shall look forward to seeing you on Wednesday. Goodbye for now." Mr. Webman replaced the receiver with a little chuckle of satisfaction. He crossed to his desk, took out the draft of his new will, and re-read it with the pride of a poet who has just composed a satisfying elegy.

In the shop, Len was doing some tidying when Mr. Carper waddled in. She was carrying a bulky parcel.

"Afternoon, Len!"

"Hallo, Mrs. Carper."

"I've come for Grandad's teeth."

"Can you repay the loan?"

"No," she answered cheerfully, "but I've brought along a really beautiful musical-box. Yer boss will want to snap it up!"

She deposited the parcel on the counter and unwrapped it. A rusty, cheap old box was disclosed. It looked rather like a coffee-grinder with a big clumsy handle, which she turned, producing a really horrible jangle.

"Ain't it a treat?" she asked hopefully.

"Mrs. Carper," said Len, "if I took that in exchange for the teeth I'd be guilty of a crime."

"Ere, wotcha mean?" she exclaimed indignantly.

"I don't know much about musical-boxes, but I do know I've never heard such a terrible row for a long time."

She drew herself up. "Ow, s'that's the way it is! In that case, I reely will withdraw me patronage this time. Give me Grandad's teeth!"

"Only if you hand over the cash."

Her tone became wheedling. "Aw, come on, Len, be a sport! Gimme the nashers!"

"It's no use, Mrs. Carper," he answered with a sigh. "You know the rules as well as I do."

"You fetch Mr. Webman. Betcha 'ee'll be interested!"

Mr. Webman called out from down the passage. "Who is that, Len?"

"Mrs. Carper, Guv. She's brought a box."

"Ask her to bring it through to my office."

"What did I tell yer?" said Mrs. Carper, picking up her instrument and stalking round the counter.

Len shrugged his shoulders and followed her down the passage.

The box was placed on the office table. Mr. Webman gave the handle one turn and shuddered.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Carper, but no one could make this box sound any better."

"You mean you won't buy it from me?" she exclaimed angrily.

"I'm afraid not."

"An earless old rogue, that's wot you are!" she cried shrilly. "You wait till I win a pool, then I won't 'alf show yer! I can tell yer I won't be buyin' me mink and diamonds 'ere. I'll get 'em from someone who's 'elped me in the past."

Snatching up her box, she glared at him, then with a toss of her head she strutted out of the room.

Re-entering the shop, she was confronted by the Angel, who stood on the other side of the counter beside her harp.

MRS. CARPER stared at her in astonishment.
"Crippeen! Who are you?"

"Good afternoon," said the Angel politely. Then when Len came in behind Mrs. Carper, "Hallo, Len!"

"Why, hallo, miss!" he exclaimed.

"This is a wonderful surprise!"

"I've come about something very important. Do you think I could have a word with Mr. Webman?"

"Yes, of course, I'll go and tell him you're here."

The Angel smiled at Mrs. Carper. "Have you had that box in pawn?"

"No I haven't! It's me teeth they've got and they won't let me 'ave 'em back."

The Angel looked distressed. "You mean you've had to pawn your teeth?"

"Yus, ain't it ghastly?"

"It certainly is!"

"I ask yer, 'ow many people are that poor they 'ave to put their nashers in pawn? They ones I've got in me gob now belong to me old man—we share 'em, see?"

"How awful!" said the Angel in a shocked tone. "Perhaps I can persuade Mr. Webman to help you. How much do you owe him?"

"About a quid altogether, hovey. I'll be that grateful if you can do summin' for me!" Mrs. Carper went into a corner of the shop and sat down to await developments.

Mr. Webman entered the shop, beaming with pleasure. He was followed by Len.

"Good afternoon, my dear. How delighted I am to see you again!"

"Good afternoon, Mr. Webman." The Angel smiled at him sweetly. "I've come to throw myself on your mercy."

"No, surely not. What can I do for you?"

"Something frightful has happened."

"Oh dear, I'm sorry to hear that!" He looked at her over the top of his glasses. She did seem to be rather agitated.

"You remember me telling you I hadn't stayed in London before? Well, the fact is I've completely overspent myself."

"Ah! Presents to take home?"

"Yes, and the hotel I've been staying at has just given me the bill, which has come to a lot more than I thought it would. You see, this is the last day of my holiday. I'm going home this evening. But there's something else to be paid as well as the hotel bill." She paused and her eyelashes dropped.

"I—I've had very bad luck with the dogs."

"Oh, my dear! I warned you about greyhound racing!"

"I know you did, Mr. Webman. But I met a kind bookmaker, who let me open a credit account."

Mr. Webman shook his head. "What a silly thing to do!"

"I haven't backed a single winner."

she whispered.

"How much do you need altogether?"

"Three hundred and fifty-one pounds, four shillings and threepence. But if you could just let me have two hundred and fifty pounds, I could probably make arrangements to pay some of my debts later."

"That's a lot of money, my dear."

"Do you think I don't realise it? It's quite spoilt the last day of my holiday."

"That's understandable."

"But if you could make me another loan on security of my harp, I promise you faithfully that one day—perhaps in twenty years or so—I'll return and pay you back."

Mr. Webman spread out his hands.

"I'm sorry, my dear, but I can't possibly make you a big loan on such an uncertain basis. I'd like to, but you must believe me it's out of the question."

"Oh, please! I shall be put in prison if I can't pay my debts. Then when I get home there'll be a fearful row and I'm certain to lose my job."

Mr. Webman was silent for a moment. Then he said, "I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll buy your harp from you."

She shook her head vigorously. "Oh, no, I couldn't sell it!"

"Listen to me, my dear. I'll be very generous. I'll give you every penny of three hundred and fifty-two pounds for it."

"That's certainly a very generous offer," she said, "but I don't see that I can accept it. Oh, what a position to be in!" She pressed the palm of her hand against her cheek, staring at him in dismay.

Then suddenly she brightened. "I've just thought of something: A friend of mine—that is a colleague—is arriving in London on holiday this afternoon; I'm meeting her later. Now if I could lend her, say, twenty pounds, she might lend me her harp until I find another one."

Mr. Webman hesitated, then he smiled. "Very well, I'll make it three hundred and seventy-two pounds."

Her eyes filled with tears of gratitude. "Oh, you are a kind, generous man!" she whispered. "I can't ever forget what you've done for me. I tell you what I'll do—I'll ask my friend to visit you and try to help you in some way; she's awfully good at helping people with their troubles."

Mr. Webman chuckled. "Thanks to you, my dear, I have no troubles." He

took a cheque-book out of the drawer. "Now who do I make this cheque out to?"

She stared at him in wonderment. "Cheque?"

"Well, you don't imagine I've got all that money in the till, do you?" Len gave a slight cough. "Guv, if she's going off this evening, she'll certainly want cash. Neither the hotel nor the bookmaker will accept a cheque."

Mr. Webman nodded. "Um—yes. I suppose there's only one thing for me to do and that's to take you round to my bank and pay you in cash."

Len looked at his watch. "It's nearly three o'clock."

Mr. Webman came round the counter. "We'll have to hurry, my dear. The bank closes at three."

"There's just one more thing I want to ask you," she said, looking at Mrs. Carper. "Could you let this lady have her teeth? I'll pay you whatever she owes."

"Yes, all right," he said. "Len, give Mrs. Carper her teeth."

"Oh, thank you, luvy!" exclaimed Mrs. Carper. "That's what I call real chur-ratty!"

The Angel turned to Len. "I'm afraid this really is good-bye, Len."

"Yes, miss. But before you go, I want to thank you for all you've done for me. I won't ever forget you."

"There's nothing to thank me for," she said gently. "You've given me a great deal of pleasure and enjoyment. Len, I shall always remember that dance. It was such fun."

"I know Jenny would have liked to say goodbye to you. By the way, we're going to be married, miss. Not for some time, mind you, because I've got to get somewhere in the Navy first, but it won't be long."

"I'm so glad to hear that. Give her my love and I wish you both all the very best of luck."

Mr. Webman said, "I don't want to hurry you, my dear, but unless we go now we'll miss the bank."

"Yes, of course!" she said. "Good-bye, miss," said Len. She gave him one last smile. "Good-bye, Len."

About three hours later, the four people whose lives had been most affected by the Angel's activities were gathered together in Mr. Webman's shop.

As soon as Mr. Webman had returned from the bank, he had got in touch with Mr. Stillvane, who had agreed to come out at once to make an expert examination of the harp. He then telephoned Ned, who, of course, wanted to be present at this important occasion. Len had asked if he might ring up Jenny, who in turn had told her father. And now they were all here, watching Mr. Stillvane with tense expectancy.

Mr. Stillvane, who was a small, silver-haired man with a rather enigmatic manner, did not utter a word while he was making his inspection, which was a very thorough one.

When, at last, he turned to Mr. Webman, there was no change in his expression. "It's a Del Mander right enough," he announced.

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief. "Ah, it's good to hear you say that, my friend," said Mr. Webman.

"If it's not an impertinent question to ask, how much did you pay for it?" Mr. Webman beamed at him. "Three hundred and seventy-two pounds."

Mr. Stillvane was flabbergasted. "You've been done! Its real value is about fifteen pounds at the very outside."

Jenny gave a little gasp. Ned exclaimed, "Impossible!" Sergeant Lane gave a low whistle. Len muttered, "I still swear she was an angel!"

Mr. Webman said nothing for the moment. He was utterly and completely stunned.

Mr. Stillvane went on, "Del Mander harps are fairly uncommon, but they aren't particularly valuable—as I tried to tell you on the phone, but you'd rung off—and you see this one isn't in very good condition."

The silence which followed this pronouncement was broken by Sergeant Lane.

"Mr. Webman, what made you think it was worth such a large sum?"

"I met a man named Parker in the Red Lion. It was he who told me it was very valuable." Mr. Webman spoke in a low voice which shook slightly. "I met him for the first time a few hours after the Angel came into my shop and pawned the harp. The circumstances were so very strange that . . . well, I believed him."

"When did you last see him?"

"About a month ago."

Mr. Stillvane said, "I imagine he was in league with the girl who sold it to you. I should say you've been the victim of a confidence-trick."

Ned exclaimed, "I don't believe it! Parker might have been genuinely mistaken about the value of the harp—after all, he didn't know anything about the value of musical-boxes. Besides, it was only by chance we met him in the first place."

SERGEANT LANE remarked cynically, "Con-men are very clever at making a first meeting look like chance. They usually find out all they can about their victims before they contact them."

"There's not a scrap of proof to show that Parker was connected in any way with our Angel!" persisted Ned.

"It seems pretty clear to me," said Sergeant Lane.

Once again, silence fell on the room. Len and Jenny looked at Ned, hoping he would say something which would restore their faith. But the little Irishman had been shaken to the core by the disaster which had overtaken his friend. He felt incapable of continuing his defence of the Angel.

"Sure, we've all been tricked!" he said at last.

Len, Jenny, and Sergeant Lane recognized the truth in his admission. In this materialistic age it is not easy for any of us to believe in things which cannot be explained in terms of scientific reasoning.

But four people, who lived in down-to-earth East London, had allowed themselves to believe that a heavenly being had intervened in their lives. However, there was no doubt that the effects of these interventions had already proved of the greatest consequence to them.

Len had learnt to rid himself of a crippling dependence upon his mother, and had been able to prove to himself, to the world, and most important for him, to Jenny, his possession of those natural qualities of manhood which his mother's domination had from boyhood so effectively sapped from him.

Sergeant Lane had better understood the importance of allowing the sensitive, imaginative side of his nature adequate expression. Mr. Webman would go on instructing the Club musboxodists and had in them found a wider and more satisfying outlet for his natural creative and paternal instincts.

And lastly, Ned, who was not an East Londoner, had found a girl who would make him an excellent wife. Doubtless, he would tell the story of "Her Blisfulness" to his grandchildren, although he would omit the sequel.

But the realization that their Angel was "no angel" produced a feeling in

all of them that certain great moments in their lives had been robbed of validity. They felt cheapened, disillusioned and angry with themselves for ever having believed in the supernatural.

Sergeant Lane pulled out his notebook.

"Mr. Webman, I'd like you to give me some details about this man Parker."

Mr. Webman spread out his hands in a gesture of hopelessness.

"What is the use, my friend? He's done nothing for which he can be arrested."

"That's true. But we often find that even top-notch confidence-tricksters make a slip sooner or later. I shall have to put in a report to Scotland Yard, and I expect it will be sent to the Continent and to America."

"I'm sorry, I can't tell you anything now," Mr. Webman passed a hand across his head and whispered, "Thirty-five years in business and I allow myself to be taken for a ride by a couple of . . ." He could not find the right insult.

Mr. Stillvane said gently, "It happens to all of us sooner or later, particularly when we buy things we don't understand."

"Yes, yes," Mr. Webman put a hand on his shoulder. "You must excuse me, my friend. I am a little shaken. Let us go through to my office and we'll have a glass of wine. I think we could all do with a drink, eh?"

They moved out of the shop. As they walked down the passage, Len took Jenny's hand and gave it a squeeze. She looked up at him quickly and he saw there were tears in her eyes.

While Mr. Webman was getting out a bottle of sherry and some glasses from the corner-cupboard in his sanctum, Mr. Stillvane looked round at the shelves crowded with musical-boxes.

"A magnificent collection!" he declared. His attention was suddenly caught by the Hartog box standing on the table. He picked it up and examined it closely. "I say, this is a beauty! Surely it's a Van Hartog?"

"Yes, but it's broken," replied Mr. Webman dully.

"What a pity!" Mr. Stillvane flicked open the lid and closed it again, then replaced the box on the table.

"You see," said Mr. Webman, "it doesn't work—it never will."

He poured out the sherry and everyone took a glass.

Mr. Stillvane, who was still eyeing the Hartog box, said, "You know it would be worth quite a tidy sum if it worked."

"How much?" asked Mr. Webman.

"Oh, I'd say between four and five hundred pounds."

Mr. Webman drew in his breath sharply. "And to think I've just lost three hundred and seventy pounds. Oh, what a fool I've been . . . what a fool!"

His eyes went down to the box and he idly opened the lid.

At once, there was a faint whirring sound, followed by a cascade of beautiful music which electrified everyone present, for it was like the echo of a harp being played.

The music swelled until it filled the room, and as Mr. Webman and his friends realised that they were listening to the Angel's "Song Of Heaven," an entirely new expression dawned on their faces. Silently, they looked at each other and nodded. Their dejection was replaced by a feeling of assurance and inward rejoicing.

When the lovely melody came to an end, Mr. Stillvane was the first to utter, "Good heavens, it's amazing!" he exclaimed.

"Well, I'm blessed!" whispered Mr. Webman.

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"WAYWARD HEART"

A complete short story

By FAITH BALDWIN

WHEN, shortly after the war ended, Lucy Colsten went to London to seek her fortune, her family and friends were certain that she would be a sensational success.

She had what it takes: looks, intelligence, personality, and ambition. But, in the little stir created by her departure, there were dissenting opinions.

For instance, that of Daphne Davis, who'd gone to school with Lucy. Daphne was a student in her second year, and came home for a weekend on, it so happened, a train which pulled into the small country station just as Lucy's train was preparing to depart.

When Daphne alighted, there was a crowd on the platform and she said, to the girl she'd brought home to meet them, "There's one thing about living in a small town; they love to spread out the red carpet!" Then she realised that the group on the platform was in honor of a departure, not an arrival.

She saw her tall brother Tom's head above the cluster of people and called out to him; at least Tom had come to meet them. He turned, and waved, and she and her friend waited, surrounded by luggage, for his cheerful grin and helping hands. But he took a long time about it.

Now he came towards them, smiling. He kissed his sister and shook hands with her friend whom he knew, but not as well as she or Daphne had hoped. He said, "Sorry, ladies. But I was killing two birds—Lucy's leaving for London."

"This I have to see," said Daphne. "Bring the cases, Tom, and let's cross the platform."

Lucy stood on the step of a carriage. She was medium tall, and beautifully made. She had smooth, jet black hair under an effective white hat, a very lovely skin, and cool dark eyes.

She carried herself with such assurance that in the eyes of almost every beholder she appeared a great beauty. She wasn't, really.

"Heavenly," said Daphne's friend, who'd never seen Lucy before. "She is attractive."

"Attractive?" repeated Daphne thoughtfully. "I suppose she is but to me it's rather a cold sort of beauty. Sometimes she frightens me. She always seems to be so sure of herself."

Daphne's friend was about to say something more but the train started to move off and Lucy with a calm smile gently disengaged her hand from that of Tom's who had leapt forward and given her a final quick kiss.

"Write soon, darling," he said softly, as if he didn't want anyone else to hear his last words.

"Of course," replied Lucy calmly. "But don't expect long letters till I'm settled, I—"

Her words were lost as the train gave a self-conscious hoot and drew out of the platform.

At dinner that night at the Davis' the matter of Lucy's departure was discussed. Mrs. Davis explained the situation to Daphne's guest.

"You see, Agatha," she said, "Lucy's always been, well—different."

"Why?" demanded Daphne. "A hundred girls have gone to London."

"I know," admitted her mother, "but from the time she was a little thing her heart was set on leaving Dawley. Look how she worked, even as a youngster, and how she saved. Odd jobs, baby sitting, sewing. She had much a knack with alterations and hats, too. Agatha, working at home after school, and all that sort of thing."

"Not that her mother hasn't worked for it, too; she's quite as ambitious as Lucy. She wanted Lucy to become a nurse. She's one herself. Her husband was a doctor, one of the best, and a hardworking. Everyone loved him. He died of a heart attack the year Lucy started at the Grammar School. There was very little money."

"He rarely charged a full fee, and half the time he didn't send out his bills. Mrs. Colsten had to sell the practice and the house and take a job herself. Since Lucy wouldn't go into hospital, her mother wanted her to have a university education, but, oddly enough, she wouldn't. She took a business course instead. She said, her mother told me, it was the key to every door."

TOM said, clearing his throat, "She won't need a key. The doors will just naturally open for her."

Daphne grinned. She said, "You're prejudiced, Tom."

"Aren't you?" he asked quietly.

"If you mean, in another way, well, maybe," she admitted. "I don't dislike Lucy Colsten. I just don't like her much. She's always so superior."

She turned to Agatha. "Lucy was our Head Girl at school," she said, "and the shining light of the Dramatic Society. Oh, heavens, you know the type. And always just rather condescending, just a little remote."

Tom pushed his chair back; it scraped on the polished floor of the dining-room. He said, "What a catty thing to say!"

Daphne said, "Sorry, I know you've taken her out more than anyone else, but I'll bet she won't give you a thought from now on."

"There's really no reason why you should say that, Daph," said Tom angrily. "It's quite normal for Lucy to want to get away for a while, but that doesn't mean she's cutting herself off from Dawley and her friends for the rest of her life."

"That's what you think," retorted his sister. "But just remember my words, young man."

Her father said, "Let's hear no more about it, Daphne. I don't like your attitude at all. I've never found Lucy Colsten anything but charming, intelligent, and with a courtesy towards older people you'd do well to emulate."

"How many letters of introduction did you give her to people in London?" asked his daughter.

"Four or five." He caught himself up. "What has that to do with it?" he demanded.

"Nothing," said Daphne, demurely. Daphne was his pet child; he passionately loved her but he wished she were ten years younger and that he could spank her occasionally.

Lucy hadn't forced her way into his office, not at all. He'd met her in the High Street, said he'd heard she was going to London and was there any way in which he could help.

This was automatic. He was always helping Dawley's young people. He'd made an appointment for her and she'd come in, looking cool in a thin summer frock.

"I'm determined to make good, Mr. Davis," she told him. "I must. My mother's sacrificed so much for me. I have no special talent, of course." Here, she'd smiled. "No illusions about the stage, radio, or television. I sing and act a little; I photograph well. But that's not enough. It just seems to me that if I could begin as a secretary I could work up easily into some executive position one day."

"Of course you can, my dear," he'd answered sincerely. "I don't believe there's anything you can't do, no matter what you say. You're very modest, Lucy."

"On the contrary," she'd said. "But it's sensible to know one's limitations." After that he'd dictated, signed and given her the letters, addressed to two bankers, a lawyer, and the personnel manager of a London store.

Lucy arrived in London and went straight to a business girls' club recommended to her by Mrs. Warren, the wife of Dawley's chief solicitor, who had once lived at the club.

"It's all women and gossip," she warned Lucy, "but you'll learn to take that in your stride. I'll write Miss Finch, the warden, and tell her about you, my dear."

Lucy unpacked. Among other things she took from her suitcase a folding picture frame, with her parents' photographs, and in a small gilt frame a snapshot of Tom Davis. She looked at that for quite a while. Somehow, Tom was the only mistake she had made in her campaign, the campaign of putting Lucy Colsten right at the top. She had not intended to fall in love with Tom.

When she discovered that she had she had thought it out carefully; it was not a catastrophe. She'd get over it.

and so would be. A pang of anger and anxiety pierced her, as she contemplated Tom's getting over it. . . . But that, too, would pass.

I have to be Somebody, she reminded herself.

In Dawley she was somebody, as Doctor and Mrs. Colsten's daughter, and a Head Girl at school. Among her own friends she was considered the prettiest and the girl most likely to do well. Where? In Dawley? . . . where she'd always be somebody, without the capital S?

What if she had, the other night, told Tom that she'd marry him?

He'd said, "I'll make you happy, Lucy, I swear it!"

She didn't doubt that. She had already experienced an unreasonable happiness when he was near her, as on that last night. She had permitted him to take her in his arms and kiss her. But happiness wasn't enough; not that kind of happiness. . . . The edge would become blunt; they'd settle down and live comfortably forever after.

Some day Tom might become the manager of a small bank in the small town. They'd have a family. They'd be like a million other couples all over the country, perhaps more secure and fortunate than some they both knew.

When Lucy read magazines she turned first to the non-fiction, the success stories, preferably those about women who had clawed their way up the ladder on their own. . . . women with initiative, ambition, and drive; women like herself. She had known she was one of these since she was twelve.

Not long after moving into the club, Lucy obtained a position in the big London store to which Mr. Davis had recommended her. She became secretary to a minor executive. Her salary was quite good; her work was excellent and earned her, in six months, a rise and a small promotion.

She said to the personnel manager: "You understand, Mr. Garth, I don't intend always to remain a secretary. I would like to learn as much about the business as possible. I want to get on in it."

"What further qualifications have you?" he asked, amused.

"I like people," Lucy said after a moment, "but I don't go overboard about them. I like the things this store sells, the luxury things. I like clothes. I think I understand them."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean, why some lines sell and some do not."

He said, "Perhaps you have applied for the wrong position. Suppose you were to start in selling? You might get to the top of the tree one day. It's slow, but it can be done."

She said earnestly, "I'm not interested. I wouldn't like personal selling, nor buying either. I'd like—once I have learned something about it—advertising. I have to start this way on the secretarial side. I realise that one must learn the business first."

Speaking later to the minor executive to whom she had been assigned, the personnel manager said thoughtfully, "Keep your eye on her. I have an idea she has ability."

During the first six months Lucy looked around and made plans. There was a nice girl in the advertising department, secretary to the man in charge. Lucy met her first when she went up to the office with some letters. They lunched together in the canteen.

The girl's name was Janice. She was engaged to be married. "Only we can't afford to, until Johnnie earns more money."

"You'll go on working?" asked Lucy.

"Oh, yes, but not here. Johnnie expects to be transferred to the North."

Lucy and Janice became friends; they lunched together often, and Janice came to the club. "How can you stand all these women?" she inquired.

"I don't mind. Even if I could afford a place of my own, I wouldn't, for a while. This way I can save; and when I feel I have enough money in the bank then I'll get a small flat. It won't be anything marvellous but one day I'll have one in Park Lane."

"You're joking," said Janice with a faint giggle.

"Of course," replied Lucy quietly. But in her heart she knew she wasn't joking. If it wasn't in Park Lane it would be somewhere just as expensive. It would take time, naturally, but everything worth having was worth waiting for.

Lucy went to Janice's home in the suburbs and met Johnnie, who worked for a shipping company. She met their friends. She spent considerable time extracting from Janice all she knew of the advertising department.

"A headache if you ask me; everybody competing with everybody else and not enough promotions to go round!" Janice told her.

AFTER six months Johnnie had his transfer. Janice resigned and Lucy took her place. Janice, of whom her nervous boss was fond, recommended Lucy. "She's awfully clever, Mr. Hunt," she said, "and such a nice girl."

He'd seen Lucy, of course. He said, "She's too good-looking. I lose more secretaries that way. Look at you, Janice!"

Janice blushed. She was mildly pretty; she couldn't compete with Lucy, and knew it, and didn't care. She had Johnnie.

She said, "She hasn't any boy-friends, at least not in London. I believe there's a 'steady' at home in the country. She's spoken about him a couple of times. But, as far as I know, she's not particularly interested in marriage. Johnnie and I have introduced her to several men. Some of the other girls have, too, at her Club, and from the store. But she just doesn't seem interested."

Lucy moved to Janice's little office. She listened to all she could and asked intelligent questions. She was, in fact, the most intelligent secretary Hunt had ever had. He liked her very much, but he did not fall in love with her. He had been happily married for a good many years.

During the first summer Lucy didn't go home but her mother came to spend a brief holiday with her.

They had a very good time and Mrs. Colsten thought Lucy looked very well, if thinner. Her clothes were new to her mother; she hadn't many but those she had were good.

She had several pieces of paste jewellery, too, but in such good taste one would hardly recognise them as being false. There was a fur stole, too, that added elegance to a black suit which was the favorite of her new clothes.

"Have you fallen in love with London?" Mrs. Colsten asked.

Lucy smiled. She said, "I like it very much."

Her mother wasn't astonished, knowing Lucy. It would be the same in any town she went to. She would like it and adapt herself but would never fall furiously in love with it.

"Your letters didn't say much about the weekend Tom was here. I've seen him, of course. . . . Was it fun?"

"Wonderful," said Lucy, "he gave me a very good time."

It had been quite a weekend; dinner at good places, two plays and night clubs afterwards. Tom had wanted to explore London with her, evenings and Sunday . . . bus riding, walking, queer odd little places.

"Surely you know them all by now?" he'd said.

But she shook her head. "Very few. I bus-ride all the time. Can't we do something different?" She looked at him frankly, "If you can afford it," she added.

"Money is meant to be spent!" he laughed.

On Sunday night she went to the station with him. On the crowded platform he took her hands, bent and kissed her. He said, "It's been very nearly perfect."

"I've loved it, Tom. I'm so grateful to you."

"Darling, change your mind. Change your heart and come home with me."

She shook her dark head, smiling. "I am home, Tom," she said.

Getting into the carriage, he turned to look back, towering tall, and her heart closed like a fist. She thought, I won't let him come again. I can't.

Her head ached as she leant back in the corner of the taxi she took back to the club. Whether it was the sadness of seeing Tom off or the thought of the work she had neglected over the weekend, she wasn't sure. But she knew she mustn't let him come to London again to distract her. There wasn't room in her life for Tom—and her ambition. . . .

If Mr. Hunt did not fall in love with Lucy, his assistant did. His name was George Sims.

He was a brilliant copywriter and a feverish, garrulous young man who sometimes over-drank and who was determined not to marry until he was forty. And when he did to marry a girl about twenty-two, with a figure, a face, and no brains. He'd often encountered brains behind faces and they gave him competition.

Towards Lucy, his approach was candid. "I warn you, I'm a wolf. I am not to be trusted. I won't marry for another ten years, and a girl who'd interest me now—you, for example—wouldn't in ten years' time, even if I could keep her on the hook that long. Come out with me tonight. I'll feed you lavishly and then we'll watch TV," he said, with a sinister smile, "at my place."

"I'd love being fed lavishly," Lucy said, "and you don't look sinister, just a little silly. There's quite a good TV set at my club—in the public lounge. If you can't miss your pet programmes, we'll go there."

"I withdraw my invitation. I'd forgotten I have an engagement."

Lucy went into her office, "Have fun," she said.

So, he took her out to dinner. Returning her to the club in a taxi he found that she would not struggle and released her.

"You are more kissed against than kissing," he remarked, "No feeling!"

Lucy adjusted her little hat. She said, "How Victorian you are, Mr. Sims. . . . you still believe that payment has to be exacted for a comparatively simple meal."

Mr. Sims' secretary went on holiday; another married, and left, and Lucy worked for both Mr. Hunt and his assistant. Some days later Mr. Sims arrived late with a crashing hang-over. Lucy greeted him, and put some post on the desk.

He had worked there, late and alone, on the previous night and left a litter of papers behind him. She had stacked them neatly before he came in.

"I'm in bad trouble," he said sadly. "The Old Man's had me on the carpet."

this last week. He says I'm slipping. It could be." He looked at the folder. "Tidied up, didn't you? Efficient little thing. Did you look at the stuff? If so, what's wrong with it?"

She said, "I read it. And it wouldn't make me buy. I think the average woman is sick of being told everything, from a gas cooker to a winter's coat, is amusing or fabulous or exciting. She'd rather know what she's getting for her money in durability and value."

"Maybe you could write this copy," he said nastily.

Her eyes shone. "I'd like to try."

"Go ahead. If the Old Man storms in, I've gone to my doctor!"

Late that afternoon he gave the folder to his superior. Mr. Hunt looked at it and his face relaxed. He said, "This is more like it."

"Your secretary," said Sims grimly, "is mainly responsible. Oh, she has a lot to learn, I suppose, but she's a forthright girl. She says, as an average woman she knows the angles."

Presently, Mr. Hunt had another secretary and Lucy wrote copy. Nothing was too difficult; nothing dismayed her. She wrote, and she rewrote. She experienced failure and modest success. She kept on, with a single-minded, dogged enthusiasm. She listened and she asked questions.

Through George Sims she met other people in advertising, agency people, people from the advertising departments of other shops.

She went home to Daphne Davis' wedding to the Warrens' only son, because Tom urged her to do so, and because she wished to see her mother. It was a pretty wedding and Lucy in her severely cut frock attracted almost as much attention as the bride.

She was not one of the wedding party though Tom was best man, but she went out with him on the following evening. It was autumn; she had been away for a year. They dined at the little inn which had always been their favorite eating-place.

"Come home," he said, "Lucy, I love you so much."

Her treacherous heart turned over. She shook her head.

"But why? I could swear that you loved me..."

"Perhaps, but not enough."

"There's someone else..." He shrugged his shoulders. "Someone you don't perhaps love at all but who is more eligible."

"No one." Her mouth narrowed to a thin red line, and her small jaw set firmly. "It's no use, Tom."

"I'll come to London. I'll camp on your doorstep."

"Then I won't go in or out." She picked up her coffee cup and drank, looking at him. "You'll get over this, Tom. And I shall, too, if it kills me, she thought."

By the end of her second year he had got over it. He married Daphne's friend, Agatha, a nice girl, and Lucy did not attend the wedding.

On the evening of Tom's wedding day, she had a drink with George Sims.

"You're very quiet, Lucy. I can't even interest you in the summer sales campaign."

"I was thinking."

"Of anyone I know?"

"No." She set down her glass. "Just a man I know. He was married to-day."

George raised his eyebrows. "What, an ex-boy friend? Not that steady of yours? Not 'Old Faithful'?"

She nodded. Her face was still but her eyes were as bleak as a winter sea.

"You were in love with him?" he asked, and felt an extraordinary emotion, part triumph, part jealousy.

"I suppose so."

"How do you feel now, exactly?"

It took her a moment to answer. Then she said, "Free."

He asked, curiously, "Why did you turn him down... I assume that you did turn him down?"

"It wasn't what I wanted."

"What do you want?"

She smiled, a little. "Your job," she said softly. "To begin with—"

George whistled. He said, "Well, thanks for the warning... But Lucy, why?"

She looked at him. He might laugh at her but he would not despise her. He would, she believed, understand. So she said firmly,

"I want to be somebody."

He didn't laugh. He nodded and asked, "With a great big capital S?"

"Yes."

"Now," he wondered aloud, "why, exactly?"

She said, after a moment, "I've never been, you know. Until I was twelve my father's mother was alive, and lived with us. She had a back like a steel rod, and a character to match. I was something of a show-off. She used to say, 'Aren't you somebody today?' or 'I suppose you think you're somebody.' Maybe that's when I got the idea that I could be, if I worked at it—let nothing stand in the way."

"By nothing, you mean 'Old Faithful'?"

She did not answer; and after a while, he said, "You frighten me, Lucy."

When leaving her at the club, he asked, "How long will you stay at this maidenly retreat?"

"As long as it suits me..."

"Does the idea of living alone scare you? You can always set traps outside your door."

"I could take care of myself. But this way, I save money."

He asked, lingering, "Still playing hard to get?"

"Not hard," she answered, smiling.

"Just—impossible."

GEORGE went away and thought with despair that he was really hooked this time, and to the last woman in the world, for him. You can't, it seemed, chart your course; there's always the submerged rock, or, he thought, the iceberg.

Lucy cultivated the acquaintances to whom George had introduced her. She did not like many. Most of the women were attractive, knowledgeable and hard. She made a mental note. However hard you are at the core, you must never let it show on the surface.

Sometimes she went with one or the other of these women to a very fashionable restaurant for lunch; after a time these women knew her when she went alone. It cost considerable money and was worth it.

She sat at a small side table and watched the women at the other tables; she looked at their clothes, their make-up and hair styles — she listened to their light voices and their accents; she observed their manner, and manners if any, and their jewels. Some day she would be entrusted with Paris copy...

By the time she was next in importance to George Sims and was writing the Paris copy, appealing with a sort of quiet elegance to women who could still afford to wear model clothes, she moved from the club to a small flat.

It was not especially attractive but she had privacy, her own bathroom, a kitchen, and a good address.

It was in South Kensington. It wasn't Park Lane but it was on the way.

"You could ask me in," George suggested, "and cook dinner for me with your own little hands."

"I could, but I won't," said Lucy drily.

"You're afraid of yourself, aren't you?"

"Very flattering to you," she said, "but how wrong you are."

"You've come quite a way," he reflected. "You're getting to be somebody in this business."

"Still without the capital S," she reminded him.

"That will follow. Would you like to be somebody else? For instance..." he cleared his throat. "Mrs. George Sims...? It's years ahead of my schedule but—"

They were alone in the office. They had been working together; the secretaries had gone home. Lucy rose and walked to the windows which overlooked the street. She stood there with her back to him. She heard him rise and cross over as she felt his urgent hand on her shoulder. He said quietly,

"Well, Lucy?"

She turned. "Thank you, George, but no."

"Why?"

"I'm not in love with you."

"Is that the only reason? I know it would be for most women, but I believe you have one which is more important to you," he said.

"It's not what I want."

He put his arms about her and kissed her. He said, "You don't need anyone, of course, except as a ladder rung. Is it nothing to you to be needed? It seems to be what most women want."

She said, moving away, "I'm not most women."

When George Sims accepted the offer which took him to America, Lucy became assistant to Mr. Hunt. They got along very well. He said, "You've also done the major part of Sims' work for some time, Miss Colsten. I wonder how he'd get along in the States?"

"Very well, I should think."

He looked at her sharply. He said, "If Sims had stayed with us he would have had my job, when I retire or crack up."

"Yes."

"Even though he was not wholly reliable," said her superior, "you, I believe, are reliable."

So it was settled without further discussion... Some day Lucy would head the great store's advertising. She didn't have to stop there. There were other higher executive positions. She was quite aware that the managing director had watched her work and progress with great interest for a long time now.

He told her so.

At the end of ten years, Lucy Colsten was head of advertising. Mr. Hunt didn't retire or "crack up"; he was killed in a car accident.

A few months after his death when Lucy had settled herself in her new position, she went to an estate agent who catered in exclusive flats. He had one that would just suit her, only small but unfurnished. So central, he said,

"Where?" asked Lucy.

"In Park Lane," he explained. "The owner of the building is very particular about who has this flat but with your references, Miss Colsten, both from your firm and from your bank, I think the owner would be delighted if you took it. You could move in any day."

And so Lucy moved to Park Lane after a hectic week of buying furniture, floor coverings, curtains, kitchen utensils. It left a big hole in her bank balance but when she finally settled in and looked around the sitting-room with its color scheme of wine carpet,

cream curtains, wine and cream striped couch, the Sheraton table, the low, polished bookcase, she knew it was just what she had wanted over all those years.

Her bedroom was in pale yellow and was waiting for her. She was home, the single bed with the bedside table at last.

Lucy had a few women friends in the store and out, none very classy; all agreeable; a number of men found her enormously attractive. Some were married, some had been; and several desired to marry Miss Colsten.

All in all, her life was pleasant and successful. She was well known in her particular circle and fairly well liked.

She did not return to Dawley for her holidays; instead, her mother came to the flat at Christmas and Easter and during the summer.

Sometimes they went to the South of France; other times just to the English seaside. One year, they flew to Spain and spent the time touring. Another, they went on a short sea cruise. Wherever they went they had the best and considerable attention—the beautiful, successful Miss Colsten and her mother.

Last summer, Miss Colsten was thirty-three, very young for so responsible a position. Her mother came to be with her and they drove up to the Lake District in Lucy's small sports car.

"Aren't you tired of it?" her mother asked her suddenly, one night as they went back to their hotel after a long walk.

"Of what?"

"Everything, London, for instance."

"I'll never be tired of it," she replied, astonished. "After all, I'm just at the beginning."

She switched on a light and sat down to look at the evening paper. She looked for quite a while at the picture of a woman who had recently achieved the directorship of a famous store.

"I suppose, Lucy, you have had opportunities to marry. Why don't you—before it's too late?"

"But it's not what I want."

Her mother said, "But if you come to want it later, in ten or fifteen years?"

Lucy rose and sat down at the dressing-table. She said, "I have a good life, mother, and am unanswerable to no one. I like my work, I do as I please. I save my money."

She did. She wasn't extravagant. During these holidays she spent money freely, to make the time happy for her mother.

She also, for some years, had sent her an allowance, increasing it as often as she could.

She was considered one of the ten best-dressed women in the business field, buying carefully and never too far in advance of the fashions. Her flat was a centre for well-known writers, theatrical people, businessmen. She was acknowledged as one of London's charming hostesses.

"Tom and Agatha are very happy," her mother said, "yet I don't believe he ever got over you, Lucy. He settled for second best. But she suits him. The children are sweet."

"Of course," said Lucy. She turned, smiling. "Don't be sentimental," she added. "He did get over me which is as it should be."

"I think you were in love with him," her mother said, "however much against your will. Did you get over him?"

"Years ago," Lucy said to her cheerfully.

During the next holiday she went home. Her mother had died in her sleep. Mrs. Davis had found her; she

had called in that morning. It was she who telephoned Lucy. "Stay with us," she urged, "don't stay in the house alone."

Mr. Davis had seen to everything by the time Lucy got there. She would not, however, stay with her old friends. After the simple funeral she went back to the house, which she would sell. There were a few things she would bring to London, she thought, wandering around rooms that were as empty and desolate as herself.

The Davis' came that evening, and their son and his wife were with them. Lucy regarded Agatha in some astonishment. She would never be a pretty woman, and yet she was quite lovely.

Tom had put on weight, which became him. He was, as she had always known him, considerate and quiet but with his special twinkle.

On the afternoon of her departure, she was leaving Mr. Warren's office when she met Agatha Davis in the High Street. And Agatha said, "Let's have tea, Lucy... at the Old Tea Rooms."

They were opposite the Old Tea Rooms, which were so much a part of Lucy's childhood and growing up. She hesitated and then said, "All right, Agatha..."

THE owner Miss Sweet, was waiting at the tables.

"Haven't seen you for years, Miss Colsten," she said. "This town will certainly miss your mother." Miss Smith sighed. "Seems like she was the heart and soul of it. Never too busy or tired to lend a hand." She shook her white head.

"When my old father was dying," she went on, "Mrs. Colsten came every night for weeks and sat with him. Wasn't much she could do, except make him comfortable. But that way, I got some sleep. We couldn't get a day nurse with all the flu about. So while I looked after this place your mother looked after father... She was a wonderful woman."

Agatha said, with respect, "She was certainly somebody."

Lucy nodded. Her throat was strangely tight.

Soon Miss Sweet wandered away, and the little café was almost empty. Agatha looked at Lucy with admiration. She said, "I don't suppose you'll ever be coming home again."

"I don't suppose so."

"Everyone's proud of you out here," said Agatha. "We brag about you a lot. One of the local girls who made good—like Mollie Evans on the radio. Then, of course, we brag about Daphne's Jim... he's awfully young to be a newspaper editor... and Lucy, do you remember Rita Lawson?"

"Rita? I knew a Theima Lawson. Who's Rita?"

"Oh, she was just a little thing when you went away. She's twenty now... she has the most wonderful voice. She's been on radio several times and just a little while ago got a part in a musical comedy... it hasn't opened yet."

"It's called 'Look for a Star'."

Quite a few people are going up for the first night. Tom was talking about it just the other day."

"If you come, you must have dinner with me," said Lucy.

"We'd just love to. Tom's mother will take the children. I do wish you had the time to see the house and the infants, Lucy." Her face was bright with love.

Then she said, "You know, for a while I hated you."

Lucy made no pretence at astonish-

ment. She said, "That was over long ago, Agatha."

"The third time I came to visit Daphne, you were leaving Dawley; we had to wait for Tom to say goodbye to you. I was crazy about him even then. He wouldn't look at me, of course. And for a long time after that all I heard about was you... I used to envy you, terribly. You were starting a career, and you had Tom, too. Or could have..."

Lucy said, gently, "That was a boy and girl thing, Agatha."

"Not to Tom. He told me, you see. Oh, a long time before he asked me to marry him. I don't think he was in love with me when we were married. During our engagement, well, I was in two minds about it all. One was, I'd marry him and love him enough for both of us; and the other I couldn't and I shouldn't. But I did."

She leaned back, smiling. She said, softly, and colored a little, "He's in love with me now, Lucy." Her eyes were clear and proud and unafraid.

"Why of course," said Lucy, a little wearily.

"You don't understand. I—well, I have no illusions about myself. I'm not especially pretty, although I'm better looking than I used to be... I'm a fairly good housekeeper, and as good a mother as I know how to be. I'm certainly not clever. But as far as Tom's concerned, I'm a paragon. I hope he never finds out."

Her eyes were mischievous now. "I don't intend that he shall. You see, I suppose it's just because he knows I love him so much. It makes him feel important..."

"As if he were somebody," said Lucy, and Agatha looked at her, not understanding.

"Well, of course he is," she said energetically.

Then she laughed. "Oh, I see what you mean," she went on. "Somebody with a capital S..."

"That's it," said Lucy gravely. "Not just anybody."

"But everyone," said Agatha, beckoning Miss Sweet, saying, as Lucy picked up her handbag, "No, this is my treat, Lucy—everyone is somebody to someone, whoever they are. Everyone who's lucky, that is."

That evening Lucy sat in the train and remembered her first journey to London—so many years ago. She listened to the train wheels. She tried to think of practical things Mr. Warren would handle all the legal affairs. He was her mother's executor. He would keep in touch with her.

She need not come back again, ever except perhaps to pause briefly at the cemetery...

They were proud of her in Dawley, and of all their boys and girls who had become successful elsewhere.

She sighed and opened her handbag. She looked in the mirror, bracing herself against the motion of the train. She looked old tonight. It was natural; she was tired and emotionally worn out.

The last tie had been cut; it would dissolve into dust.

Ignoring her sleepy fellow passengers, she put her hands on either side of her face and lifted the muscles. She thought, "I'm beginning to look—hard."

After a while she put the mirror away and sat staring at the occasional light flashing by in the darkness beyond the carriage window. The wheels revolved and spoke in a harsh, ascending rhythm.

Somebody said the wheels somebody, somebody.

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